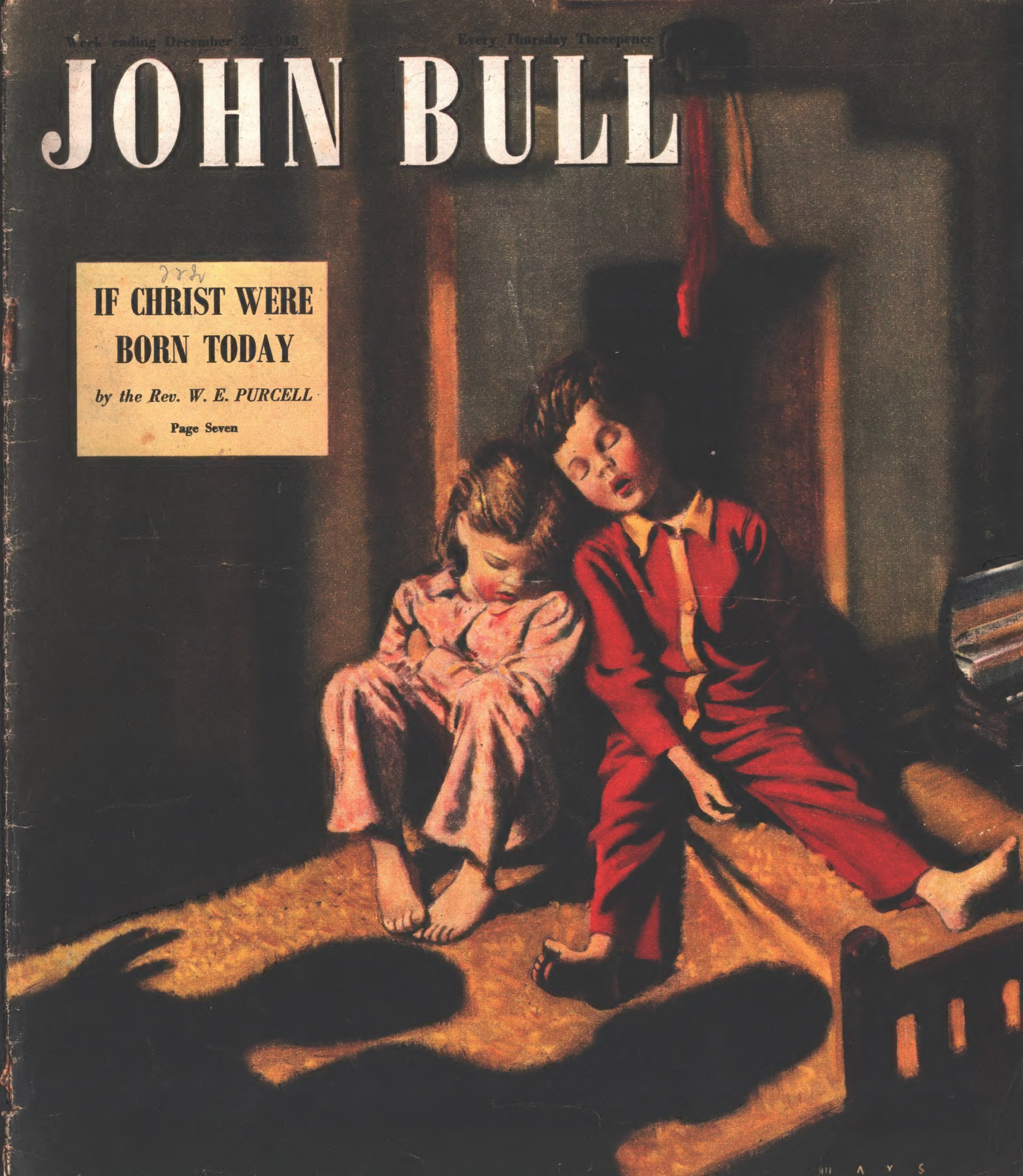
Week ending December 25, 1948 Every Thursday Threepence

JOHN BULL

IF CHRIST WERE BORN TODAY

by the Rev. W. E. PURCELL

Page Seven



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★ NEW SUPER ABSORBENT TAMPAX No. 2. *In packets of 10* . . 2/-

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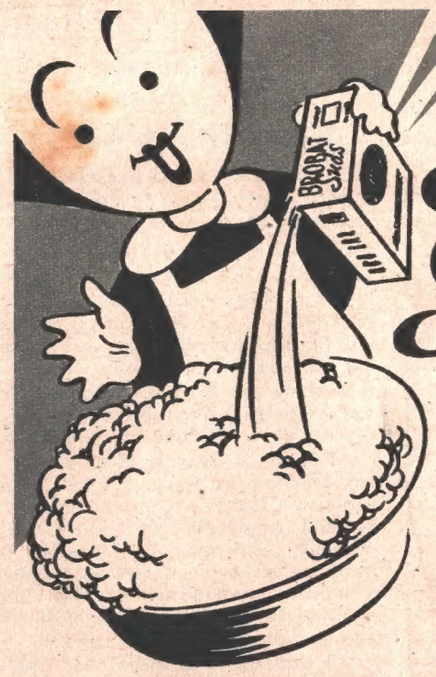

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AND NO COUPONS

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New BROBAT Suds 8½D

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Mother was distressed when she found that she couldn't breast-feed baby, but at the clinic they soon reassured her. Cows' milk would be perfectly all right, providing it were modified to make it digestible. This can easily be done by adding Robinson's 'Patent' Barley; then the milk will not upset even the most delicate little tummy.

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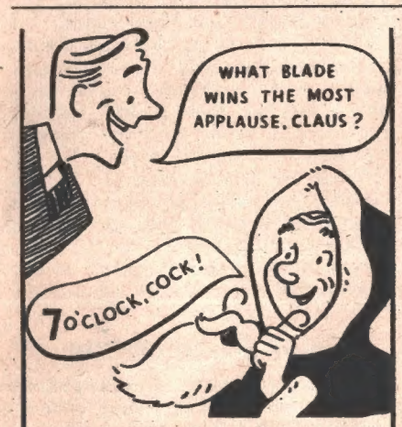
FREE SAMPLE or "STEPS TO HEALTH" booklet on care of Infants, sent on receipt of 2½d. to cover postage and packing. Send 5d. if both required. Keen, Robinson & Co. Ltd., Dept. DE.121, Norwich.

CVS-121



Just the thing for Father's Christmas stocking—a good supply of 7 O'CLOCK blades. They'll last him well into the New Year; help him to put a good face on things. Every 7 O'CLOCK blade is triple-ground to consistent super-sharpness — a gift that every shaver's grateful for.

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11D FOR SIX (*incl. tax*)

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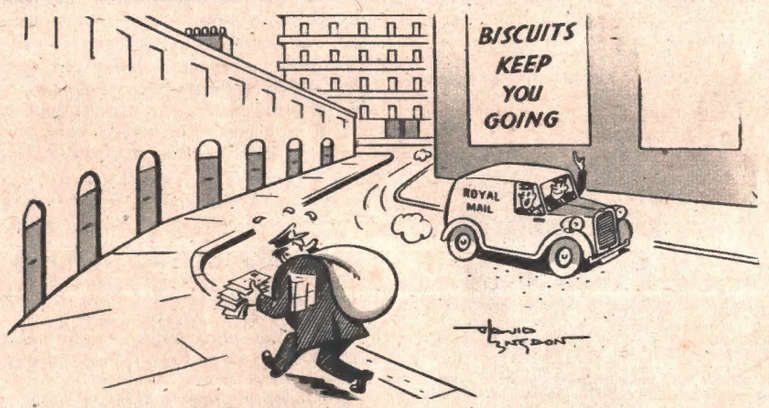

Issued by the Cake and Biscuit Manufacturers War Time Alliance to remind you that although biscuits are still scarce, they remain the most compact energy food.

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The Pifco Massager is a pleasure to use—simple, safe and beneficial. It will help you to good health and a beautiful complexion. It relieves many aches and pains. Supplied with four Applicators for Face, Neck, Body and Scalp massage, and simple Instruction Booklet.

For use on A.C. only.

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PIFCO Electric Massager

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For effective medication, iron must be in a fresh, unoxydised state, *i.e.* ferrous iron. Once it is oxydised into ferric iron it is useless. Hence the importance of the special process used in the preparation of Iron Jelloids, for it is this process which ensures that the iron-content of the Jelloids will still be fresh and effective whenever the Iron Jelloids are taken. Again available in two sizes, 1/6 & 3/8, including purchase tax.

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Quality Cleaning and Dyeing plus D.D.T. Mothproofing plus...

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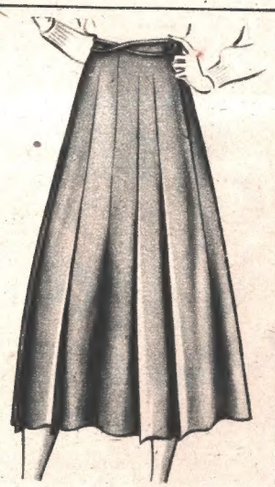

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NOW 1/- PER TIN

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"My kiddies love it . . . . . so good for them too!"

Wherever you use milk — use Carnation. It makes lovely puddings and custards — it's grand in tea and coffee. Remember it's pure fresh cow's milk from which part of the water has been removed by evaporation. Therefore to make rich creamy milk you simply *add* water as directed on the label.

TOMMY HANDLEY says "KOLYNOS for me"

AT home with Sam, the bulldog, the famous comedian rehearses a joke. Tommy Handley is another star who follows the best advice on teeth care and uses 'Kolynos' twice daily. (1) 'Kolynos' cleans *between* teeth where food sticks and starts decay. (2) No other toothpaste is so free from gritty abrasives that can scrape enamel. Only 'Kolynos' keeps teeth sparkling white so safely!

Only KOLYNOS DENTAL CREAM gives tooth enamel such 2-way protection

JOHN BULL

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DECEMBER 25, 1948 VOLUME 84 NUMBER 2217

World Citizen No. 1?

A YOUNG AMERICAN ex-Serviceman named Garry Davis camped out on the steps of the U.N.O. building in Paris last autumn to draw attention to his plan for a world parliament.

Davis believes that ordinary people everywhere hate war, want peace, and will back leaders who put peace before the old ideas of patriotism.

Nothing new in that, of course, but the reactions to Garry Davis's "stunt" deserve some thought this Christmas.

At first, he was laughed at as a crank. Now he is being taken more seriously. Dr. Evatt, president of the General Assembly of the United Nations, has taken the trouble to write him a long letter. Other prominent people are backing him openly. He got an audience of 10,000 at a recent meeting.

All this does not mean that Garry Davis has discovered something we never knew; or that he is on his way to becoming the united world's first president. Unhappily, the world is very far from that, as yet.

But it does show that a ready response is waiting for sincere leadership against the forces of hatred, suspicion and cynicism which endanger our civilization today.

It also shows that a lot of people are disillusioned by the continued failure of the politicians to work together harmoniously over international conference tables.

And for every man and woman who now supports Garry Davis, there must be millions more who would join his world peace crusade if they thought it had the slightest chance of succeeding.

Surely there is a moral here for all bickering statesmen?

The Marketing Muddle

THE FABULOUS MUDDLE in the marketing of vegetables still goes on —and the housewife is the chief victim, held to ransom every shopping day.

Recently Cornish farmers have been selling broccoli in the streets of market towns, from farm carts, at twopence apiece — while 300 miles away in London greengrocers charged 9d. for the same article. Peas for which the grower has been paid 2d. a pound have been sold at 6d. Tomatoes for which the grower has been paid 3d. a pound have been sold at eighteenpence.

There are far too many intermediary middlemen, not performing any really useful function, who "take their cut" on the journey between the farmer and the greengrocer's shop.

For example, one Essex farmer sent six bushels of marrows to Covent Garden and received in return a cheque—*for one shilling!*

What happened? Here, for the enlightenment of housewives, is the statement enclosed with his small cheque:

"To selling six bushels of marrows at 2s. a bushel, 12s. Less cartage 4s. 6d., handling charge 3s., selling charge and commission, 3s., toll 6d. Total disbursements 11s. Credit balance 1s."

This is only a glimpse of the waste that goes on between the grower and the housewife.

There is a Bill before Parliament now that may help, but it does not go far enough to ensure the efficient marketing and distribution of our food.

Experts say that we could save almost two shillings on every shopping pound. We must use our brains to save our pockets.

Building for the Future

ANEURIN BEVAN DEMANDS that the new houses of 1949 shall be as well built and equipped as those of 1948, in spite of the high building cost.

He is right in insisting that women of all classes shall in future be liberated as far as possible from domestic drudgery by all the labour-saving gadgets and intelligent house planning we can devise.

Houses now being built are there to stay for a hundred years or more. Generations of women will have to tend families in them. So we cannot afford to repeat the mistakes of the past hundred years.

Britain is cluttered up with bad houses. They were built that way in Victorian times because domestic labour was cheap and plentiful, and nobody cared what happened to the "skivvy" or the working-class wife.

Between the wars, thousands more houses were jerrybuilt to sell at a cheap rate for high profits—without regard to the people who were going to live under their leaky roofs.

Whatever the criticisms of the Government's housing policy, it is at least avoiding those evils. So stick to it, Nye—and make every new house a decent modern home, worthy of the woman whose life will be spent in it.

Door to Education

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY is a fine phrase. Yet how many young fellows of first-class capabilities have had to swallow their ambitions at one gulp and go to work to earn a living, or help to keep parents, when by further education they could have become, perhaps, first-rate engineers, technicians, scientists or teachers?

Never before have the professions been so hungry for first-class recruits.

That is why we welcome the report of the Working Party on University Awards. It recommends that eleven thousand students entering the universities should get grants from public funds so that promising young people can attend without hardship to themselves or their families.

Another first-class recommendation by this Working Party: that the National Service Act affords a good chance of selecting young conscripts who might profit by Oxford or Cambridge.

Now it's up to the Minister of Education to put these recommendations into effect.

Kiddies love the fruity flavour of

O.K SAUCE

—IT'S 44% FRUIT

THE SAUCE THAT DOES YOU GOOD

COME ON DARLING YOU'RE ALL RIGHT—
Thanks to "Chunkys"
THE 'LUXURY' BOOTEE WITH THE SOFT non-slip SOLE
Obtainable at most good Shoe Shops, including Manfield's, Saxone, Dolcis, Lilley & Skinner, Benefit Footwear, Randall's, Timpson's, Stylo, etc.
(FOR SMALL CHILDREN ONLY) In various colours. Sizes 1-3 12/9 Sizes 4-6 14/3
Hutton of NORTHAMPTON

If you get dirty, cleaning . . .

YOU'LL BE GLAD OF

The No. 1 soap powder in the red & yellow packet.
Large 8½d. Small 4½d.
J. Bibby & Sons Ltd. Liverpool

on washing day!

SUCH LOVELY WINE FOR SEVEN-AND-NINE

Our British Wines represent the best value in wine obtainable today, and the name "WHITEWAY" on a label has been a guarantee of purity and quality for over 50 years.

7/9 RUBY & WHITE

XMAS PRICE LIST

RUBY and WHITE Good full bodied wines.	Per Bott. 7/9
BRITISH SHERRY. Brown Excellent for general use.	,, 8/6
BRITISH SHERRY. Pale Dry Superb flavour and bouquet for all occasions. Extra high strength of 32° Proof Spirit.	,, 9/6
GINGER WINE and ORANGE WINE Full alcoholic strength. Ideal for Xmas festivities.	8/3

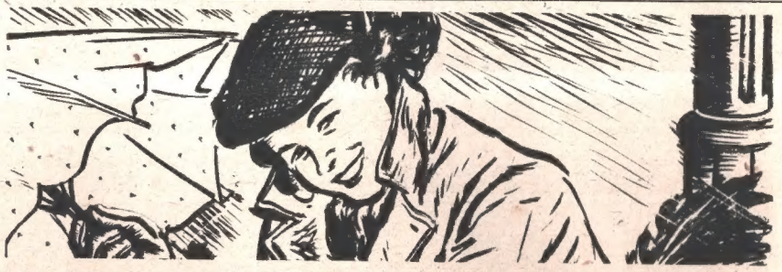
WHITEWAY'S BRITISH WINES

CVS-107

Smoother hands easier washdays with *FAIRY* soap

Your hands will stay smoother when you use Fairy Household Soap. That's because Fairy is pure soap and contains no harmful soda. Mild and thorough in action, Fairy cleans the dirtiest wash completely, easily — and is safest for skin and delicate fabrics.

Always ask for Olive Green FAIRY SOAP



The glow of good health is the finest defence against winter weather. The body, given sufficient supplies of 'protective' vitamin A and 'sunshine' vitamin D, is helped to resist infection from colds and influenza. In these austere days it is well to reinforce the normal supply of vitamins A and D by taking Crookes Halibut Oil each day. Do this all through the winter, and you will face any weather with confidence.

CROOKES HALIBUT OIL

OBTAINABLE ONLY FROM CHEMISTS

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Healing Warmth

To relieve the pain of rheumatism, lumbago, bronchitis, etc., apply Thermogene Medicated Wadding where the pain is. Its healing warmth disperses congestion, eases the pain and protects the part. Also wear Thermogene Medicated Wadding for extra protection against chill, particularly round your middle and in your shoes. Still at pre-war prices and free of purchase tax. Of all chemists, 1/3, and 3/- for the family size.

THERMOGENE

Medicated Wadding

For colds and coughs THERMOGENE VAPOUR RUB Of all chemists 1/6

Short-eating, sweet, tempting!

Weston's Dainty Fare

Such beguiling little biscuits! Their name aptly describes their nature, and anyone who can resist them must be very strong-minded indeed. Weston's Dainty Fare are not really plentiful yet, but they who ask are most likely to receive.

Weston's BISCUITS

HOW DOES SHE KEEP SO CHEERFUL?

Many women today are feeling the need of a tonic to help them to face present-day strain. Wincarnis, with its bracing content of Extract of Beef, Malt, and Sodium Glycerophosphate, happily combines an efficient tonic with the palatability of an agreeable wine.

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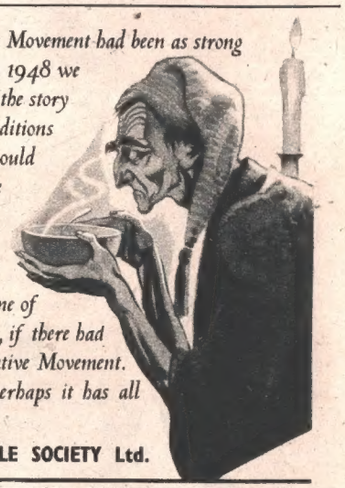
DEPRESSION · NERVOUSNESS
EXHAUSTION · LOW VITALITY
POOR APPETITE · AFTER ILLNESS

WINCARNIS

'The Wine of Life'

if there had been no SCROOGE

If the Co-operative Movement had been as strong in 1848 as it is in 1948 we wouldn't have had the story of Scrooge—the conditions that created him would no longer have existed; Dickens might have turned to the Bar or Parliament to find an outlet for his reformative genius, and England have lost one of her greatest novelists. If . . . if . . . if . . . but then, if there had been no Scrooges we wouldn't have had a Co-operative Movement. So, this Christmas of 1948, we may feel that perhaps it has all worked out for the best.



an announcement of the **CO-OPERATIVE WHOLESALE SOCIETY Ltd.**

SMOKE to your heart's content

The perfect Herbal Smoking Mixture is Heath & Heather's No. 64. It costs 1/8d. per 4-oz. packet and is a blend of finest quality British herbs. Send 1/8d. for a packet of No. 64 to

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HERB SPECIALISTS

ST. ALBANS

It's only natural . . .

. . . for the little chap to want to copy Daddy — busy in the garden — planting, watching things grow—always happily occupied, he's seldom bored or fretful. But should some minor upset put him out of sorts, then Mother naturally turns to 'California Syrup of Figs'. This kindly, pleasant laxative contains the juice of ripe figs with an extract of senna. Purely vegetable and naturally nice.

'California Syrup of Figs'

IF CHRIST WERE BORN TODAY

by the Rev. W. E. PURCELL

THE PLAIN IMPROBABILITY of the Christmas story has to be admitted. And it is best frankly admitted, since that is a first step towards a proper grasp of the extraordinary nature of the story.

One of the ways of getting at the basic strangeness of Christmas is to cross off all previous Christmases that have ever been and to imagine that this—Christmas, 1948—is the first one.

Assuming this to be the first Christmas, what would happen?

When the famous story, *The Passing of the Third Floor Back*, since filmed and staged, was first written, a certain amount of offence was taken because it showed Christ as a solitary lodger in the back room of a cheap boarding-house. The other guests only by degrees became aware of that strange and usually silent figure among them.

In a similar way, the coming of the King of Kings now might well be on a very humble plane.

Stables are a bit out of date, and more people live now in towns than in little villages like Bethlehem.

In other words, the setting of ordinary life, into the midst of which, as the Bible goes out of its way to emphasize, Christ was born, has altered so vastly that the background to a modern Nativity would be startlingly different.

But the essentials would be the same, and it might all quite well happen in one of those little streets in a smallish town where nothing very dramatic normally takes place. Just births and deaths, marriages and engagements, boys and girls in love saying good night under the stars, and, during daytime, the factory hooters sounding as usual.

Someone Else . . .

Then, one evening, there would be Someone Else on the way to join this queer, poignant pageant of human existence which we call life.

There would be a light in a front bedroom window, a doctor's car parked outside. Downstairs in the house there would be a husband, nervously drawing on an unlit pipe and hoping things were going well with the wife.

Maybe, as in the old, old story, his name, too, would be Joseph. As he looked from his door he would see the stars, clear and cold; would hear a trolley-bus hissing along the main road; would see it stop by the pub on the corner. As people stepped into the pub they would see a crowd in the bar—the inn, the Bible says, was full.

After a while, the district nurse, cap still on but sleeves rolled up over hefty forearms, would find time to go downstairs and say it was a boy and that the husband could go and have just a peep in a minute.

There would be no bells, no carols. It would be just another ordinary mid-winter night, with most people indoors and the aerial poles, out in their back-yards, pointing up to stars which might seem that night to include one extra bright one, shining over whatever place it was that the baby was born.

Thus might the birth of Christ be now. It would have nothing to do with churches, no connection with the wealthy, the wise or the smart.

It would not make news, and our great roaring self-centred world would go on its way as though nothing special had happened.

Illustrated by Arthur Wragg

A house in an ordinary street, a doctor's car outside. . . . A modern setting, maybe, but the same vital Christmas message

Only as the years passed would a few people, like the boarding-house guests in *The Passing of the Third Floor Back*, come into contact with a personality of a kind never encountered before.

The strange thing would be that the influence and teaching of that personality would go on being remembered all down the years. Movements and organizations of world-wide importance would spring from it. The book containing the record of what He said and did would become an all-time best-seller. And there would emerge from the happenings of the night when He was born a new religion.

If such an account seems strange in a modern setting, it seemed equally odd at the time when it was reported as happening. By far the most convincing proof that it did so is the inescapable fact that people make more and not less fuss about it now than at its first occurrence.

Time, which rusts over most things, has had startlingly little effect upon the stainless steel of the Christmas story. Inevitably, the present doings of our world, which glare at us from the headlines, will be dulled over. But *this* event shines brightly still, a living, debatable occurrence.

Yet the Christmas story, beautiful and memorable as it is, belongs to the world of religion, and perhaps for a majority of people today that world is a little-known mystery land where they do not really feel easy and where the language spoken is unfamiliar.

One result, as far as the authentic first Noel is concerned, is that the angels and the wise men and the star of Bethlehem have come to look rather like stage properties whose annual reappearance, the shepherds carrying cardboard lanterns, usually means that somebody is going to pass the hat round.

And even the infant Christ, guest of honour of the Christmas banquet—the real and only cause of the gifts, the good wishes and the sparkle in children's eyes—is politely sung about in churches but somehow doesn't seem to belong to everyday life.

But He does! This is the discovery so dramatically made in *The Passing of the Third Floor Back*. That story calls Him the Stranger, as He is to most people still. And it is when this stranger comes for a while, as a temporary guest, into the lives of a few men and women that they begin to learn startling truths about themselves.

The people in the story were not a very attractive group.

For that matter, no cross-section of ordinary humanity, looked at impartially without sentiment, is likely to make a very pretty picture. As with the boarding-house in *The Passing of the Third Floor Back*, so with the street, the hotel, the works canteen, of our day: these, with the searchlight directed on private lives, would just as easily yield specimens of not-so-good people, bad people, indifferent people.

Good at Heart

It is the Stranger, the un-named Christ of the play, who, leading the various characters to look upon themselves and each other from a new point of view altogether, enables them to see what before was invisible—the goodness and the kindness which was in each of them all the time if only they had given these qualities a chance to emerge.

The new point of view to which he attracts them—not by preaching about it, but by practising it Himself—is simply this: that if we can only get the habit of looking for the good in other people instead of the bad, we shall generally find it is there; that if we can only learn to give priority to the interests of others, we shall find life a more gracious affair altogether.

There is an echo of the disappointments, the postwar hangovers, the next-war anxieties nagging at many hearts today in the few words spoken by two figures early on in *The Passing of the Third Floor Back*, shortly after the Stranger has come into their lives:

"This isn't *all* the world, is it?"

"What do you mean?"

"Us sort. All this lying and cheating and snarling—despising one another and ourselves. Isn't there anything else?"

"Yes, there are sweet thoughts, fine feelings and self-respect. . . ."

Of course there are! It is terribly important to remember that truth now, because it is the one fact which makes life worth living, going on with, bothering about.

The religion of which Christ was the Founder has given a name to this attitude towards other people. The name is "love."

It is perhaps typical of our day that

this word generally has a sex connotation. But of course it really means something much greater; something never yet tried out on a big enough scale; something which could yet save the world from the hates which threaten to consume it.

That is what Christ came to this world to tell us about. If He came again now, at this Christmas of 1948, the message would be the same. And we can be certain that he would emphasize the one great point in His message which has always been overlooked, perhaps because it is so difficult to carry out.

That vital point is this: a new deal in human relationships depends on the individual. We must put it into operation in our own lives—in our dealings with husbands, wives, children, neighbours.

One of the main reasons why life is for the most part so stale and sour now is that so many of us have lost the kindly gift of looking for the best in, and seeking the best for, other people in everyday life, where Christ belongs.

We can see clearly why the Bible goes to some lengths in the Christmas story to emphasize that Christ was born in such humble circumstances.

If we were to come upon Him now, as the boarding-house guests did in the play, it would be in common-or-garden life that we should find Him—in *our* street, *our* village. And if we look lovingly enough through the eyes of our better selves, we shall find Him there *now*.

Yet, in spite of all this, the final importance of Christmas rests on the fact of who and what Christ said He was.

It was His claim—and not the invention of any organization with a vested interest in "putting it across"—that He was Himself of divine nature, and came into our world from those mysterious outer spheres which form the starting point for the belief in God.

That is the claim, tracked down to its source, which alone gives significance to the details of the Christmas story.

God knows we suffer grievously in our time from the feeling that in this tightly organized beehive modern world we mean less and less as individuals.

Such thoughts are fundamentally depressing, for it is part of our human make-up that we need to feel we matter as people, and that what we do and are counts for something in the scheme of things.

Each of Us *Does* Count

The significance of Christmas, of the King of Kings coming, not to a palace, but into an ordinary family, is that we *do* count. That is why He chose ordinary family life as the framework for his time on earth.

H. G. Wells, in some of his imaginings, used to visualize the dramatic coming of a master-mind to put the world straight. In *The Shape of Things to Come* it was in a futurist aircraft that this "saviour" arrived from some unknown air-base with a remedy for everything.

This concept was hailed at the time as new. It was in fact as old as the hills—or the first Christmas. People then also were dreaming of some master mind coming through the clouds of glory with a remedy for everything. Of course, it did not happen, it never will.

Instead there came the lesson, driven home by the "superman's" advent in the form of a human child, that it is by ordinary humanity facing up to the challenges of life that the world's problems are solved.

How we get on with all the folk who share our small personal world with us is a thing which affects ultimately the harmony of the wider world of which every one of us is an important part.

Individually we matter. God sent us Christ at Christmas time to tell us so, and to make it plain that, for better or for worse, we make our destinies ourselves.

When a popular, widely seen picture shows a loss, no wonder—

BRITISH

My Brother Jonathan **cost £198,000 to make, earned £1,041,000 from public—yet lost £6,000. How does it add up?**

Anglo-American film *Conspirator* (Elizabeth Taylor, Robert Taylor) keeps one of our studios busy; but some lie idle

FILMS ARE IN A MESS

by CONNERY CHAPPELL

VERY FEW OF THE PEOPLE who saw *My Brother Jonathan* can have imagined that it would eventually make a small piece of film history. But it did.

Looking back, it seems a long time ago since I originally went to the trade show of this British picture, for things grow old quickly in the film world and nothing is forgotten more easily than last year's successes.

I do remember, when I first saw it, thinking that it had its heart in the right place. It was warm and human. And it had an earnestness that was very praiseworthy. I remember how the professional viewers gave it a polite pat on the back, never dreaming that it would do such remarkable things as soon as it was shown to the public.

The first person to tell me of the box office records that were being scattered as it made its way round the provinces was Sir Philip Warter, head of the Associated British Picture Corporation, whose big network of cinemas is the only rival circuit to the Rank group.

My Brother Jonathan, which had done quietly and comfortably during a short spell at the Empire in London's West End, was attracting queues all over the country.

In the process it was blowing theories sky-high. For it had no particularly strong star appeal—it featured young Michael Denison, then little more than an unknown. It was not being boosted or stunted like that silly *Outlaw* film. It contained none of the elements of sensationalism represented by pictures like *No Orchids for Miss Blandish*.

It was just straight homespun entertainment. It became the talk of the shopping queues. It was discussed along the grapevine that links picturegoers throughout the country. It was the film which people wanted.

Best Box Office Record

The next time I saw Warter the picture had finished its first run through the Associated British circuit, and he told me that it had done the highest business of any film, American or British, for more than a year. (Its figures have since been beaten, incidentally, by another British film, *Spring in Park Lane*.)

Sir Philip is a very straightforward man, and he will not mind it if I say that I am pretty sure he was surprised. I don't think he, or anyone connected with his companies, had expected such a result.

Personally, I was very pleased. *My Brother Jonathan* was made by the old star of silent films, Warwick Ward, who has now been a producer for some years. Twenty odd years ago Ward and I used to meet most mornings of the week at a coffee shop just south of Wardour Street.

There were half a dozen of us—film people. One was a leading cameraman; another was a director; a third subsequently received a knighthood. You could write quite a book out of that coffee shop circle.

Years later, just when he was making *My Brother Jonathan*, Ward and I chanced to become neighbours, so when we met, the talk, instead of being about films and what to do with the critics, was about begonias and what to do with aphis in the greenhouse, for Ward is a keen gardener.

Knowing him so well I knew the troubles he had had making the film, the opposition he had to overcome getting his backers to agree to the story. More than anything else the success of that film was a tribute to the sheer determination of one man.

Then came the twist at the end of the story. We all knew that *My Brother Jonathan* had broken records, that it had been seen by something like 12,000,000 filmgoers or more.

What we did not know was that it had lost money in its own country!

Yet it had, on an admission in the House of Commons by Dr. Eric Fletcher, who is one of Sir Philip Warter's directors on the board of Associated British, the combine for whom Ward made the film.

My Brother Jonathan is the perfect illustration of the crazy simple arithmetic of the British film studios—the arithmetic that has produced crisis after crisis and is now responsible for so many empty studios and unemployed film technicians.

Here are the facts, as Dr. Fletcher told them to Parliament.

The picture earned more money than any other British film—with one exception—in the last year or so. It cost £198,000 to make—and the public paid £1,041,000 to see it. You would think that this gave an enormous margin of profit. Not at all.

Entertainment tax took £416,000 of that huge figure paid by the public. The exhibitors who showed the film then took £375,000 as their share of the box office takings. The expenses in distributing the film—advertising charges, cost of prints, and so on—amounted to some £20,000, and the distributor's commission on the turnover amounted to some £37,000.

In the end, the producers received back £192,000—making a loss of £6,000 on a picture which had broken records all over the country!

If that is the financial record of an outstandingly successful British picture, imagine what the figures must look like for some of the expensive failures. It is true, of course, that a film like *My Brother Jonathan* might earn up to about £30,000 outside Britain, but such figures are guesswork and cannot be relied on. The only money of which the producer is certain is the money he earns here.

More than Relaxation

Now what is to be done about it? It is surely a matter of real national importance that we establish a solid, successful film industry in this country. In the modern world films are far more than so much relaxation on a wet evening. They are immensely powerful propaganda for a way of living. It is as important that we have a free and successful film industry as it is important that we have a free Press.

At the moment that film industry is in a worse plight than it has been for years.

As I write, five of the fifteen largest studios in the country are "dark"—which is the word technicians use to describe an empty studio. Of the remainder, many are only working at half pressure. They tell me that one-fifth of the studio technicians are actually out of work.

Of films themselves, there are about fifteen first features being made in Britain at the moment. Nine are being made by Rank. This film crisis, you should note, is not with the Rank, but with the file, of the business. Rank and his henchmen are going ahead, making more films than ever. It is the independent producers who have the headache.

In addition to Rank's nine, four more films are being made for Sir Alexander Korda's group of companies, and another is an Anglo-American effort, *Conspirator*, starring Robert Taylor. The last one is *Hasty Heart*, also an Anglo-American effort.

One simple fact emerges; there is not one single independent film of top quality being made in Britain at the moment.

Hence the talk of crisis.

It must be said that the Government is busy. There are in all not less than ten committees, many of them indirectly Government sponsored, probing various bones in the anatomy of the film world. Ten committees; their output in words is enormous. They are all aiming at the same thing—to put this topsy-turvy business on to a new and permanently prosperous basis.

It is rather as though ten Harley Street specialists were fussing over a sick man, one taking his pulse, another fumbling with a stethoscope, a third testing his vision, and so on. An enormous amount of activity—and the patient is still sick.

Backers Are Holding Off

The latest flutter in all this excitement is the decision of the Government to form what is virtually a "films bank," with power to lend up to £5,000,000 to finance independent British film producers. This decision has been taken because the City financing of British films has practically dried up—which explains the dark and empty studios. Backers are holding off because the business is in a turmoil.

What is needed, I submit, is a complete change of attitude inside the studios themselves. One of the many committees inspired by the Government is starting to make an investigation into the structure of exhibition and film distribution. That is better. There is an outside chance that such a probe could spotlight the real things which are wrong with British films.

There are really two separate problems, not one. The first is: how can British pictures be made at a cost which will enable their makers to get a fair profit out of the receipts from the British market? The second is: what can be done to readjust the simple arithmetic of the distribution end of the business, whereby *My Brother Jonathan* can make money for the showmen who play it, the renters who distribute it, and yet lose money itself?

Let us take the first part first. Before the war films like *Rome Express* cost about £25,000 to make. Today the same film would cost about £250,000. Costs have gone mad. But there are very, very few films which would return £250,000 to the distributor from their receipts in Britain, so a new *Rome Express*, made at that figure, would probably result in a loss.

One of the chief troubles with British production is that too many producers believe their own salesmen. They kid themselves into believing that they can make profits from pictures, costing £200,000 and over.

The upward spiral in film costs is out of all proportion to the general increase in prices. Why? Because in film making time is money—and some British producers seem to have lost all sense of time. It costs £2,000 a week to hire a studio floor which would have cost £500 before the war. In the old days the producer would have made his film in about six weeks' shooting time. For the same subject today he treats himself to twelve or fourteen weeks—or even longer.

Actors whom he could once have employed for £10 a day now cost him £100 a day. Directors' fees—once in the hundreds—now go into the thousands.

In his own interests the modern British producer should preplan every aspect of his film. He should have everything cut and dried. He should not have to waste a minute on the studio floor.

Yet you still hear of films being started while the writers are working out the story! I have heard of films whose dialogue has been rewritten, scene by scene, in front of the cameras.

Pictures made in this fashion must lose money—or else be very lucky.

Stick to the Blueprint

It would, I suggest, be a very good idea if, before a producer is given a Government loan, he has to present some responsible committee with a complete working scenario of his film, accompanied by a complete break-down of his story in terms of set construction, and so on. And it should be forbidden for him to alter it subsequently.

If this could be done, the "films bank" might be a real blessing to the British film world.

What a breeze would blow up Wardour Street if such a move were ever seriously suggested! But that, it seems to me, is the only way to put the studios on a sound footing. Privately financed British films have all too often been losing money. Unless some means can be found to put some order into the chaos, the taxpayer will be footing the bill.

There remains one final point. What can be done with the overall arithmetic of filmdom, whereby *My Brother Jonathan*, made with care and restraint, loses money for itself but makes a fortune for the people who show it?

Myself, I would concentrate on the £416,000 of its earnings which went in entertainment tax. It is a shockingly severe levy—that you should be expected to earn all this for the nation while you still make a loss for yourself.

The day may come when the tax on British pictures may have to go into a special fund—to subsidize the eternal optimists who make them.

Otherwise, sooner or later, there might be no more films like *My Brother Jonathan*. And that, when you come to think of it, would be deplorable.

THE TWO PROBLEMS

1. How to lower soaring costs of film-making

2. How to adjust mathematics of film-showing

The mouse who made the whole world sing

by ALAN JENKINS

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN PIMLOTT

HE WAS A very hungry mouse. Once, in summer, he had been a fieldmouse, a fat, bumbling mouse, guzzling ears of corn in the meadows that drop down to the sparkling Salzach river. Then came winter, the terrible winter of 1818. The snow froze hard.

The mouse wanted to hibernate, but could not. He was too hungry. He knew he must go to the village or starve.

The village terrified him. Its name was Oberndorf, and only a thousand people lived there: compared with Salzburg city, twelve miles south along the river, it was a very small place indeed. But to the country mouse it was unimaginably big. Here was food in plenty; but every meal was got at the risk of his life.

For the mouse was compelled to enter houses, houses where people lived, people who wanted to kill him.

As winter froze on, the people grew hungry, too. Fewer scraps fell from their tables. And in the mouse's life there was more danger than dinner. He was a cold, thin mouse now, with only an inch of tail: the rest he had left behind when one of the villagers had lunged at him with a chopper. So the mouse left the houses and sought sanctuary in St. Nicholas's Church.

Life in the church was not too bad. Church mice, he found, were not so poor as they were reputed to be. The choirboys dropped nourishing crumbs in the vestry and even in the pews, for they usually came to choir practice provided with pieces of bacon which they ate with hunks of black bread.

But after a time Pfarrer Mohr, the curate, forbade this; and the mouse had to be content with beetles until Harvest Festival, when the tiny church would be filled with ears of corn, his wistfully-remembered country diet.

As November passed, and even beetles grew scarce, the mouse became desperate. He had just got married and was already expecting a family. Most of his time he spent behind the organ, where he was safe and sound except when Mr. Gruber, the organist, strode heavily into the loft and made the whole building shiver with his deep thrumming pedals.

One afternoon in late December the mouse was almost fainting with hunger. He began to gnaw through the bellows of the organ. They were made of old, hard leather, covered with dirt and fluff, but it was better than nothing. Gnawing the bellows made the mouse rather sick.

It occurred to him that even if it wasn't good to eat, the shredded leather would make a strong and cosy nest. So he went on gnawing until he had made a hole right through the bellows.

Presently the church rang with activity. Loud young feet stamped and shuffled, there was a clamour of husky high voices, and the organ loft creaked as Mr. Gruber took his seat. A boy called Pepi Schober, whom the mouse hated, came round to the back of the organ and began to pull a wooden lever up and down. This was to pump some air into the pipes, so that Mr. Gruber could play. Usually it made a sad wheezing noise until the bellows were full; but today there was not a sound.

The mouse and his wife scuttled away into the vestry rafters. Their half-built nest lay just beneath the bellows, and they were in agony for its safety.

Mr. Gruber opened a few stops and tried one of the manuals.

"Pepi!" he shouted. "What are you up to? Pump, for heaven's sake."

He turned to mutter to Curate Mohr, who stood, arms raised, ready to conduct the choirboys. The boys in their white surplices giggled and pinched each other.

"Drat that boy. He's so stupid, you can't even trust him to blow an organ!" True it was that Pepi was reckoned to be the village simpleton, the only boy in Oberndorf who couldn't sing a note.

"Boys! Boys!" cried the curate, rushing to quieten them. Out of sight, the mouse waited in silent fear

Josef Mohr went round behind the organ, seized the lever and pumped it up and down irritably a few times.

"It moves too easily," he frowned. "What have you done to it?"

"Me, sir?" the boy quavered, wiping his slobbery mouth on the back of his hand. "I ain't done nothing, Herr Pfarrer. I think the Devil's got into it!"

"Nonsense, Pepi. The Devil wouldn't come to God's house on Christmas Eve! You must have pulled the handle too hard and broken it."

The boy began a string of tearful denials. Franz Gruber left the manuals and came round to investigate. The choirboys broke into squeals of excitement and began their favourite game of hitting each other on the head with hymn books, while Franz Gruber and Josef Mohr pulled away the boards at the back of the organ.

"*Ei*, Franz—look at that!" Josef pointed to the hole in the bellows.

"Mice," Franz said.

"Of course, it's mice," Josef snapped.

"The point is, what are we going to do?"

"It'll take weeks to get it mended," Franz worried. "There's old Schunkl the cobbler. He might be able to fix it with a bit of leather."

"Impossible. It's an organ-builder's job. We'll need a new pair of bellows."

FRANZ struck his forehead with his fist. "That it should happen on Christmas Eve! We'll never get Karl Mauracher over here till the New Year. He's up to his ears in work at this season, and he'll be snowbound anyway. Even if he came by sleigh or on skis——"

"In any case he'd be too late for tonight's service. Do you think we can sing the *Messiah* without an organ?"

"We might sing bits of it," Franz said doubtfully. "But we'd need at least two special rehearsals, and we've only time for one this afternoon. There isn't a piano in the village, and old Mrs. Steindachner's clavier is on its last legs and terribly out of tune, even if she could be persuaded to lend it to us."

"We've got to have something to sing tonight, Franz. Something Christmasy. Something really beautiful. It's no use rehearsing any new carols: the boys would never learn them in time. And the old ones—we sang most of them last year. If we could find something very simple——"

By now the boys were shouting at the tops of their voices and shrieking with laughter. Franz clapped his hands for silence, but there was still a ripple of high spirits.

The boys were getting used to the new curate, so young and full of life, so kindly and yet so sharp when he wanted something done. Josef Mohr was twenty-six and had been at Oberndorf for about a year. But Franz Gruber, the new schoolmaster, who was also the village organist, was still an unknown quantity. The boys sized him up as too much of an enthusiast to be a good disciplinarian, and they loved to see how much misbehaviour he could stand without losing his equable temper.

Both Herr Franz and Herr Josef were different from any schoolmaster or curate

Oberndorf had known before. For one thing, they were close friends. Usually the village schoolmaster and the curate were rivals. One would be old, the other young, and there would be little squabbles. But Herr Franz and Herr Josef were like brothers.

"Boys! Boys!" shouted Josef, hurrying round to the front of the organ. The boys were now hysterical with laughter. Pepi the organ blower was capering about before them. One of the boys began a mock fight with him. "Quiet, boys. A serious thing has happened. The organ is out of order!"

The boys fell uneasily silent. They had worked hard on the *Messiah*; their parents were expecting a wonderful performance tonight. The little church all lit with oil lamps, the Christmas decorations, the simple gifts and family gatherings—it all fitted together into the picture of the Austrian village Christmas they knew so well. But without the Christmas Eve service it was nothing.

THE boys knew they were the centre of the picture. Something had to be done.

"Please, sir," the eldest choirboy said to Josef, "couldn't Herr Gruber play his guitar instead?"

A gust of laughter greeted this suggestion. But Josef held up his hand: "Boys, that's not a bad idea. And it puts something else into my mind. Come, Franz!" He took the schoolmaster aside. They held a whispered conference.

"We could make a special song of our own, Franz. I'll write the words and you can write the music. You know how good at making up tunes you are."

"I don't know whether I could write a tune good enough," Franz hesitated. "I've never had any lessons in composing . . . my father was only a linen weaver and couldn't afford it. It was against his wishes that I learned the violin. And it was only by accident that I picked up organ playing, when I was schoolteaching at Arnsdorf. . . ."

"You don't need lessons, old friend!" the curate smiled. "Christmas songs come out of the heart. Am I a poet, if it comes to that? My old mother was a seamstress in Salzburg. My father . . . I hardly ever saw him. He was a soldier, never at home, always on foreign service. My boyhood was one of hunger and work; there was little joy, no books, nothing to breed a Goethe. . . . No, Franz. We have only to close our eyes and—feel."

"One moment." Franz held his forehead in a characteristic gesture. "There's a queer little movement in my head, a rhythm, like a rocking cradle——"

"A cradle!" Josef breathed. "The child at Bethlehem. A *Wiegenlied* for the infant Jesus—it's a charming idea. . . ."

The boys were fidgeting again. Josef spun round impatiently. "You can go out into the churchyard and play now. The *Herr Lehrer* and I are going to find some new music to sing. Be off with you—but come back in half an hour, not a second later!"

WHOOPING with delight, the boys scampered away. "Franz," said Josef, "go and get your guitar. It'll only take you ten minutes. I'll sit here and try to write a verse by the time you're back."

When Franz had gone, Josef sat down in a pew and closed his eyes. For a minute or two it seemed as if he were praying. His lips moved as he fumbled for words. Then, impulsively, he took a hymnbook and began to write on the flyleaf:

Stille Nacht! Heilige Nacht!
Alles schlaeft, einsam wacht. . . .

He was in tears when Franz returned with his guitar. "One shouldn't be so moved by one's own verses," he muttered. "And yet the thought of it, every Christmas——" He pushed the scribbled words over to Franz.

"*Silent night, holy night. . . .*" Franz read aloud. "*. . . Sleep in heavenly peace. . . .* Why, it's exactly the idea I had in my own mind, only I couldn't put it into words! A real cradle song!"

He tightened the strings of his guitar and strummed a few chords. Then—"How does this sound?" He played a few bars of a gentle, rocking melody.

"That's beautiful, Franz. Perfect. And—I know!—we'll put in a tenor part for me, and a baritone part for you. The harmony's in thirds, so simple that we needn't even write it down."

"And the boys can sing simple chords. Just a few notes to remember—they can learn them in ten minutes!" Franz said excitedly. "And the tenors and basses need sing only two or three long notes all the way through—the men won't be here until five, when they finish work. We'll just have time to teach them!"

He took a sheet of paper from his pocket and, using the edge of a hymnbook as a ruler, quickly drew some staves of music. "It'll be the first carol in the world to be arranged for tenor, baritone, choir and guitar!" He wrote furiously, covering the lines with bunches of tiny black spots, ovals and tails.

Very soon it was finished. Together they sang it through. As their voices died away at the end they turned and looked at each other bright-eyed.

Only Franz was still a little doubtful.

"The tune," he muttered. "I'm not quite sure that it's original. It came too easily. It reminds me a little of our old Tyrolese song—do you know it?——" He sang in dialect:

"*Geh i hinaus, zu anschen Haus. . . .*"

JOSEF reassured him: "As if it mattered! Do not all musicians use the same eight notes? If it makes the heart sing, it must be good. Well, there's no time to lose. Let's call in the boys."

As the boys clattered in, their faces red and moist with exertion after playing prisoner's base among the tombstones, a terrified squeaking came from under the pulpit. The mouse made a dash for the vestry door, trying to make his way back to his nest, but his retreat was at once cut off by one of the boys, who lashed out at him with his boot.

"There he is!" Franz shouted, forgetting he was in church. "That's the mouse that broke our organ! After him!"

A wild chase began, the boys yelling with delight. But the curate called them to order sharply. "To your places!" he snapped. "Let the poor creature alone. It's Christmas Eve—we shouldn't kill any living thing this afternoon. What if he did eat a hole in the bellows? We are all God's creatures, and——" he lowered his voice and spoke as if to himself—"and we are all hungry, some for food, and some for love and peace of mind."

A respectful silence fell upon the choirboys. Josef made a sign to the schoolmaster, who began briskly:

"Now here is your new song. I'll play it through once, so. . . . Sopranos, your first phrase goes like this. . . . Altos, you are three notes below, in harmony, like this. . . ."

The rehearsal went off easily and well. The boys, and later the men, were immensely proud and excited to be singing a song written specially for them by the two leading figures of the village. And at the service, the congregation quickly learnt the tune and joined in the last verse, humming when they did not know the words. It was as if they had known the tune all their lives.

As they drank a glass of wine together on Christmas Day, Franz smiled and said to Josef: "Well, it all went off splendidly, didn't it?"

"By the way, Franz, what did you do with the manuscript of the cradle song? I'd like to keep it as a souvenir."

"Oh, I left it in the church somewhere. We'll find it, I expect. We shan't need it again, anyway."

BUT by evening they had both forgotten it. On New Year's Day came Karl Mauracher, the organ-builder, driving through the snow all the way from Zillertal, up in the Alps by Innsbruck. He brought with him a new pair of bellows all ready to be fitted. Josef took him into St. Nicholas's Church and told him proudly how they had managed on Christmas Eve.

The organ-builder grunted "Indeed?" and set to work. He was a busy man of few words, much more interested in cathedral organs than in everyday jobs like this one.

"I must leave you to it, Herr Organbuilder," Josef said. "I am moving to a new living soon and I have a great deal to do."

For Josef had been appointed curate of Kuchl, a still smaller village near Salzburg. He did not want to leave Oberndorf, where he felt so much at home, but was obliged to accept the new offer. Above all he hated leaving his friend the schoolmaster.

"It won't be so bad, Josef," Franz tried to console him. "You'll only be a few miles away from us. I'll come over to see you as often as I can—by carrier's cart if necessary. And of course you must come and look us up at Oberndorf."

Meanwhile the organ-builder was packing up his tools. Near the pulpit he dropped a small bradawl, and as he bent to pick it up he noticed a grubby sheet of paper on the stone flags, trodden down and forgotten. He examined it gingerly, humming the song to himself. Silent night, holy night—h'm, not bad. A pretty tune, too, though like a dozen others. One of these Tyrolese folksongs, he supposed. Salzburg, the surrounding villages and mountains were full of them.

Herr Mauracher slipped the paper into his bag and set off home to Fuegen, in the Zillertal.

A few weeks afterwards he was looking for a screwdriver in his toolbag when he came across the scrap of paper again.

"The Tyrolese nativity song," he murmured to himself. "I'd forgotten all about it. I'll show it to the choral society—they collect these oddments. Probably they know it already."

But they did not know it. The melody and the simple words took hold of them in a strange way. The song had begun its long journey round the world. Next Christmas *Silent Night* was sung in Fuegen.

In the choir at Fuegen was a gangling boy whose voice had just broken. His name was Strasser and he was a glovemaker's apprentice. Being unable to sing he followed the music with particular attention, and the cradle song stayed in his mind long after the Christmas service was over. Indeed the words and music stayed in his mind for fifteen years. He was now a master glovemaker, looking forward in timorous excitement to the annual fair at Leipzig.

This was a tremendous event in his life, to leave Fuegen and journey all the way to Leipzig, so far away. Why, it took him the best part of a week to get there! And he would be there for three weeks.

How homesick he would be at Leipzig—he, an Austrian from the mountains, among all those rough unmannerly Germans! But the manufacturers who went to the fair had their own ways of making themselves at home. Every evening, when the fair closed, the merchants, having little else to do, drank and sang songs together.

Each man was expected to contribute a song from his own district; and as they came from places as far apart as Hamburg, Prague, Mannheim, Graz and even Budapest, it was as if all Central Europe were singing in concert.

SOON Strasser's turn came and they shouted: "Give us a Tyrolese song, friend! One of your yodelling mountain airs!" But Strasser was a bad yodeller. On the spur of the moment, the only song he could remember perfectly was *Silent Night*. Softly and not very confidently he sang it. There was a short silence when he came to the end of it; then a buzz of wonder and applause.

"Now that's a real pretty tune," someone said. "Sing it again, friend!"

Strasser had just reached the end of his encore when his arm was nudged and his neighbour whispered: "Look, here comes Herr Friese!"

"Friese?" he asked. "Who's he?"

"He's from Dresden. He comes to Leipzig every year to listen to our songs. He writes them down. Have you a copy of your song, friend?"

Strasser shook his head. "I picked it up at home when I was a boy. It's easy enough to remember."

But Herr Friese needed no copy. He had already scribbled the tune down by ear.

NEXT year the song was sung at a great concert of Christmas music at Leipzig and the year after that, Herr Friese took it to Berlin and had it published in a song book.

He had altered one note in the ninth bar to make it sound smoother, and it was headed: "*Silent Night, Holy Night:* a Traditional Cradle Song." But nobody knew who had written it, and why.

Meanwhile there had been great changes at Oberndorf. Josef Mohr was almost forgotten in the village. He had gone from Kuchl to Hintersee, and then to Wagrain, a long way away, some thirty miles south of Salzburg. Franz Gruber was teaching at Hallein, the next village to Oberndorf along the Salzach River, higher up the mountainside among the Duerrnberg saltmines and the mineral springs.

It was just before Christmas 1848 that Josef Mohr was taken ill. He was now fifty-six. He felt very weak indeed. He

Every Christmas, people sing the song of Oberndorf. But few outside the hamlet know that it all started with a mouse, a very hungry little mouse . . .

sent word to Franz Gruber that he thought he was going to die.

Franz came many miles through the snow and sat anxiously at Josef's bedside. The two friends had not seen each other for several years. They talked of the old days. Josef's voice was very feeble now, but Franz's presence stimulated him.

"Franzerl, do you remember our song that we made together? How did it go——?" Quaveringly he tried to sing.

"Don't exhaust yourself, old friend. Of course I remember it. Do you know the whole world sings it now?"

"The whole world, Franzerl? Catholics and Protestants, enemies and friends alike?"

"Surely. It was printed in Berlin."

"Did they put our names on it, Franz? Did they?" Josef raised himself on one elbow, his eyes staring with an unnatural brilliance.

FRANZ's face clouded for a moment. He was thinking of the words "Traditional Cradle Song," "Tyrolese Folk Song." Josef must not know that. Josef must die quite, quite happy.

"I—I don't know, old friend. I never saw the songbook myself. But I'm told they mentioned Oberndorf."

"Did they? Did they really?"

"But then," Franz sighed, "there are many Oberndorfs in Austria. There's one by the Kufstein, where the English and Norwegians come for the winter sports. They do say that the church there is called after St. Nicholas, just like ours."

"St. Nicholas—the saint of Christmas," Josef murmured.

"And then, you know," Franz hurried on, "some Germans emigrated to America and took our song with them, and I hear they sing it every Christmas in New York and Chicago and all those great new cities!"

"*Piffkes!*" Josef grimaced. "A pity that our little song should be taken to America by fat Prussians! Ah, but Christmas isn't as it used to be. Nowadays it's all gluttony and vulgarity. People don't have the old spirit we used to have in Oberndorf, eh, Franz?"

Franz was unable to speak. Josef closed his eyes. He looked very tired.

"Goodbye, old friend. *Gruess Gott!*"

Many years later there was war all over the world. But on Christmas Eve, at a point where British, French and German trenches met, a display of Verey lights went up, men laid down their weapons, enemies embraced one another in no-man's-land; and the song they sang was *Silent Night*, in three languages.

Twenty-five Christmases went by; and again two striving armies paused awhile in the gritty desert on the borders of Egypt, to sing the same song. In America a famous crooner was singing the same song with a strange difference, advertising a national breakfast cereal; and a dance band played it as a fox-trot.

"*People don't have the old spirit we used to have in Oberndorf, eh, Franz?*"

But at Oberndorf, the church of St. Nicholas was again filled with villagers on Christmas Eve. True, they were fewer, older and sadder than in peacetime, for the young men were flying bombers over London or lying stiff and cold in Russian snows, for reasons which nobody in Oberndorf clearly understood.

The choirboys wore uniforms under their surplices. They sang without the organ, as was their tradition, and Professor Felix Gruber played his grandfather's guitar.

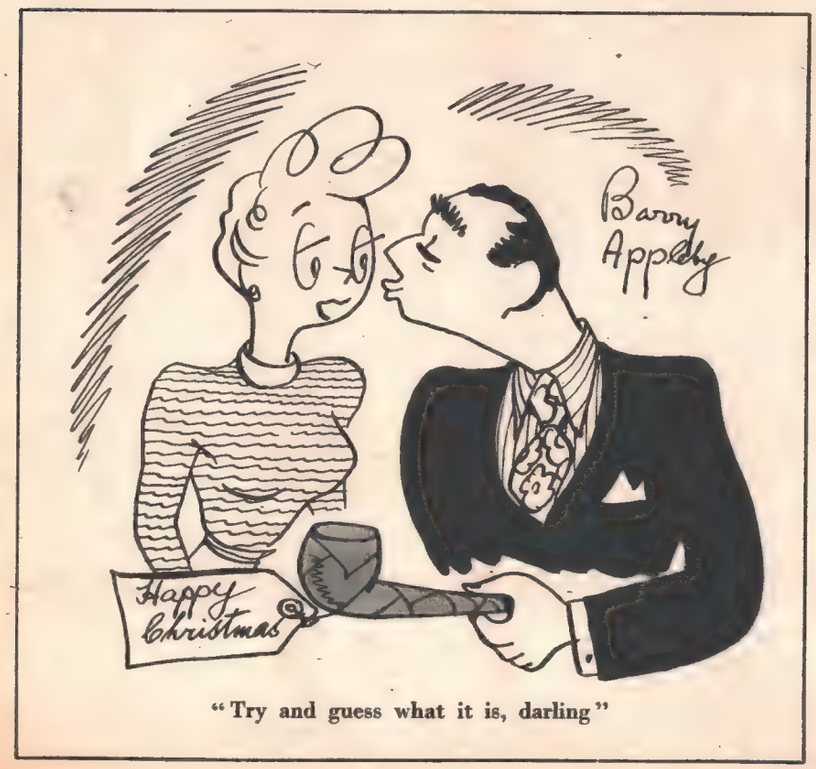
The little church was festooned with wires and microphones, and outside was a van filled with electrical mysteries, for *Silent Night* was being broadcast all over Europe. In the Ruhr, in Vienna, families huddled in cellars, the high explosive crashing about them in the streets, their lips moving tiredly:

Nur das traute heilige Paar,
Holder Knab' im lokkigten Haar. . . .

And from behind the organ at St. Nicholas crept another hungry young mouse. His was the hunger of all Europe. How many forefathers stood between him and the old mouse who had gnawed through the bellows over a century before, and so set the whole world singing?

Nobody knew or cared, least of all the young mouse.

He was looking at a snaky length of electric cable on the stone floor of the church and thinking: "Is it good to eat, or would it make a warm nest?" Shivering, he began to nibble at the insulated flex. For a new young mouse was to be born, and there was no time to lose.



"Try and guess what it is, darling"

Negro came to a palace

by FENNER BROCKWAY

He wanted the world to be true to the fine words of a U.N.O. declaration about brotherhood

THE PROCEEDINGS in the Assembly of the United Nations had been dull. All afternoon we had listened to delegates from the smaller nations who had not dared to be more than platitudinous.

Two sentences in the thousands of words spoken lingered in my ears as I made my way out of the hall—a quotation from the Declaration adopted by the Human Rights Commission:

"*All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed by Nature with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.*"

Visitors, journalists and delegates climbed the broad stairway which leads to the spacious hall in the Palais de Chaillot where tea is served. I sat at a table next to a Negro.

When he gave his order to the waitress I noticed that he spoke "cultured" English. He had the tall, lithe figure of an athlete and he was dressed well.

Milk was served with the tea. "The first time I have seen milk in Paris," I remarked.

"There is a difference between seeing and tasting," he responded. "When I was a youngster I saw milk every day—we kept cattle—but I tasted it only on the Lord's Day."

His Mission

We got into conversation. He said he was from South Africa. He had been brought up in a native reserve in Transkei, in a two-roomed hut with a corrugated iron roof, and his family was so poor that every pint of milk had to be sold for the coppers it brought.

"And what are you here for?" I asked.

"To see whether the United Nations regards members of my race as human beings," he said.

He was obviously educated. How had he penetrated the South African colour bar?

I did not like to ask him outright, but when I remarked that I understood the children of Africans could not go beyond the second standard, a smile showed he realized what was in my mind.

Yes, he told me, it is true the State schools in the reserves do not go much beyond the three R's, but there are a few missionary schools which teach up to the matriculation standard, and he and his brother were fortunate to get places at one of them.

"I must have shown reasonable promise," he continued, "because they sent me on to the missionary university at Fort Hare where I took a degree in science. Still the sun of the Lord and His servants shone upon me"—he used the phrase quite naturally—"and I was helped to go to the State medical school at Johannesburg and become a doctor.

"But there I was made to feel my colour all the time as though it were a disgrace. I was not allowed to study the illness of a white patient or treat a white case. I was not permitted to take part in university sports."

He leaned forward. "We are not recognized as human beings even on the physical plane. The Americans, with all their white superiority, have Negroes in the Olympic team. But in South Africa we are indeed outside the pale. On their present tour the New Zealand rugby team has left its Maori stars behind because our whites will not play against them."

He told me the story of his brother.

His father had for periods of his life been a labourer in the gold mines and had falled a victim to silicosis. Soon much of the work on the family holding was beyond him.

"So my mother took on all the farm work and my brother went to the mines—so that I could go to the university."

Once a month the money came from the Rand, but the brother never told how he was getting on.

His Brother's Story

"It was only when I met him during my term at the Johannesburg medical school that I learned what he was undergoing—the hardships, humiliations. He lived in a compound little better than a concentration camp.

"He was not allowed out after sunset without a pass from his employer. He had to carry a string of passes registering his identity, his job, his location, his payment of poll tax.

"He was not permitted to travel in a public vehicle with a European. In a park he had to sit on a separate seat as though he were a leper. He could not enter a cinema frequented by Europeans. He was a good workman, but was told that because of his colour he could never rise from a labouring job to a skilled one.

"My brother was highly sensitive. He felt these degradations not only for himself but for his race. He began to discuss with his fellows what action could be taken to improve their conditions.

"He was warned one night when talking to a group of a dozen men that a meeting of ten or more labourers in the compound was illegal. When it occurred a second time he was arrested and imprisoned. He came out of jail a rebel and joined in a secret agitation for a strike. That was in 1946."

The Negro looked up at me. "You may not have heard what happened in that strike. There was a clash at the compound gates between strikers and police and there were casualties. My brother was among the killed."

He held my eyes again.

"Do you understand now why I am here?" he asked. "Because he went to the mines so that I might go to the university my brother died. I feel that my life is forfeit to the cause of the liberation of my people."

As I passed out of the Palais de Chaillot, that passage from the declaration of Human Rights remained with me:

"*All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. . . .*"

YOU CAN'T TRUST TIGERS

by RICHARD COLLIER

Circus fans may think that a tamer leads a charmed life. This tamer's eighty-one scars are proof to the contrary

John Bull photograph by William Kemp

Tiger snarls but Togare keeps cool. Lose your nerve and all's lost

MOST TAMERS of wild animals start their careers young. One suggested reason has been that they want to cram in as much life as possible before it is too late.

George Togare, although he rejects that explanation, started his own career as a lion-tamer at sixteen. As he takes over Vojtech Trubkas's tigers for two daily performances at this year's Olympia Circus, Togare celebrates his twenty-fifth year in the "Big Cage."

Togare, born in Hungary, bears the marks of eighty-one scars, a constant reminder of bad days when his beasts wouldn't respond. One occasion was at the Deutschlandhalle, in Berlin, before the war. Togare had tigers in the cage that night, and from the moment that they slithered down the chute he could sense they were spoiling for trouble.

They were. In the split second that he turned his back one of the tigers sprang at him and bit right through his right leg. Togare had to stop the act, but he managed to hobble to the operating theatre that was attached to the circus. The leg was stitched in nine places—although the doctor had run out of anaesthetics.

He entered the cage the next night on crutches. "I can't do the full act," he pointed out, "but at least I'll show that I'm still the boss."

The second tiger that came down the chute was the aggressor of the previous night. He took one look at Togare standing at the far end of the cage, tensed in the middle of the ring, and sprang. Putting all his weight on his left side, Togare balanced against the bars of the cage and swung one of his crutches above his head. It broke in two across the tiger's skull, and for that night, at least, the tiger decided to try nothing more.

Hypnotic Knack

Togare has been taming tigers as part of his act since the early nineteen thirties. For seven years prior to that he worked solely with lions. On occasion he has given a mixed show of both lions and tigers.

He began as a groom, in Italy, when he was sixteen, assisting the tamer in various small ways. Grooming, which also requires a certain amount of courage, involves cleaning the cages once a day and providing the animals with fresh straw and water.

From the groom's initial approach to his charges the tamer can soon judge whether or not he has found a likely apprentice.

A certain hypnotic quality is needed. But that hypnotic quality, tamers say, would not stand them in any good stead in the jungle. There they would be eaten as quickly as any layman.

Togare graduated into a tamer's status after only six months. Some grooms serve twenty-five years without ever venturing into the ring.

After the graduate has become a tamer in his own right there are several ways he may run his business. He may buy his own beasts—lions from Africa, tigers from India—through contacting game wardens. Lions will cost him £250 apiece, tigers £500, inclusive of freight charge. For ideal training purposes the animals should be between one and one and a half years old.

On the other hand he may sign a contract with a circus to train and exhibit their lions, at a salary of anything between £1,000 and £2,500 a year. Either way his year will be divided up into two months' Christmas season in a large city, seven months on the road, three autumn months of combined rest and rehearsal.

Both lions and tigers eat roughly twenty pounds of horsemeat a day and there is also fresh straw and sawdust to be provided. Togare estimates that each beast costs twenty-five shillings a day. The hire of two grooms will cost anything from £5 to £10 a week each.

On whatever basis he works a lion-tamer is responsible for personally insuring himself, and premiums are understandably high. If he is his own boss he will need a caravan, costing in the region of £600 for the touring period. Artists like Togare, however, who are on the permanent staff of a circus have their caravans provided for them and do not bear the costs of grooms or obtaining food for the animals.

Gentler from the Wilds

Most large circuses provide winter training quarters in the form of camps. Togare, prior to his London appearances, rests up with his wife Taranda, who has also tamed tigers, in their two-room apartment at Bertram Mills's Ascot camp.

Paradoxically, whichever way a tamer works, he likes his animals to have been bred in the wild. Captivity-bred cubs form the habit of rough-handling their keepers before they ever encounter discipline and in consequence are more difficult to train.

Togare prefers tigers for speed and high quality of intelligence, lions for general trustworthiness. He explains: "If I have fifty lions I can maybe trust thirty of them. If I have fifty tigers I'm lucky if I can trust three."

One lion, named Paris, had been with him in Italy since its cub days. One day Paris was sold to another circus. Two years went by, and Togare took another job. On the first day he went to look over his new charges, and there was Paris once again. When the lion saw him it rolled over and purred.

Later on, during a show, Togare was restraining a tiger from mauling a young lion, when he tripped up. A tigress leapt at him from the other side of the cage.

But as it leapt, Paris also leapt. The two flying bodies collided in mid-air and toppled among the sawdust—long enough for Togare to get clear of the cage and call in the fire hoses. Togare believes Paris really sought to save him.

Fire hoses are normally in readiness at the side of the ring in case the animals get out of hand. Apart from that, the only protection that a lion-tamer has is his whip and a long pole. He carries a gun only during early rehearsals.

To a layman even a "trustworthy" lion might seem a trifle insecure. Togare records that Paris once bit him clean through the arm—"but," he explains, "it was only in play."

It may take anything up to six months' training before the animal will mount its stand on cue, lie down alongside the other animals for a "pyramid," and jump through a canvas hoop.

Working life of the animals is roughly twenty years, but Togare has to pick his beasts very carefully before he can stage a wrestling match with them or lift them on his shoulders.

During the autumn resting period, or during the training of a newcomer, Togare stages four ten-minute rehearsals every day. He personally supervises the cleaning of the cages and gives the animals their once-daily feed at eleven o'clock every morning.

He does this so that he can move among them as much as possible and gain their trust. Togare personally believes that cruelty has no part in the training of animals.

When Fire Broke Out

Once, when he was playing at Birmingham, a fire broke out in the menagerie and the lions were cut off. Togare went among them and soothed them until a wagon was backed up against their cages, then slid open the connecting shutters one by one and guided them through to safety. "If they hadn't trusted me that time," he says, "I'd have been finished."

Togare has very definite rules of ring behaviour if an animal attacks. The tamer must deflect his body to one side, like a bull fighter, so that his throat and chest are protected. And he must keep on his feet if he possibly can.

If a tiger fails in its attack it will return to its place without trying to maul again. A tiger will bite deep and relinquish its hold, but a lion, even if thwarted once, will attack again and again. A tamer should never attempt to reprimand or punish them afterwards.

Whatever the causes of spasmodic unrest, the tamer usually feels it himself, intuitively, days beforehand. If he starts drinking to alleviate his fears he signs his own death warrant. He loses his sense of distance, and animals, moreover, dislike the smell of alcohol.

Togare has no ideas of retiring from the ring just at the moment; he feels that he has a good few years of taming still ahead of him. But he has no illusions about the "glamour" of circus life; he knows it for a hard and dangerous game, where the pay-off is good only so long as the tamer keeps his nerve—and his assistants keep theirs.

Assistants Panicked

He remembers one occasion when the men at the ringside lost their nerve altogether. All the lions bar one had been dismissed from the cage, but the last lion in the ring turned and attacked Togare. While the lion was on top of Togare, biting him savagely, the assistants panicked and forgot to turn on the hose.

Eventually they directed a paralysing jet of water on to Togare instead. Yet the lion was so taken aback at the sight of its tamer lying winded in the sawdust, soused from head to foot, that it didn't attack again.

Says Togare, who is very ready to make excuses for his animals: "I had to spend three months in hospital, but when I came out he seemed pleased to see me. He even let me pull his whiskers. So I forgave him. I think maybe he was only playing, too."

Real Scotch will flow

It's hissing and bubbling in Highland stills now. But it's more is needed before we get an extra drop ●

TWICE A DAY W. Low's bus trundles the fourteen miles down the valley from Dufftown to Glenlivet. The conductor, a lad in battledress, who hangs on the bus steps pitching the morning papers on to the ends of cart tracks that go off up the hillsides, pointed the path I must climb to where the grey-and-white distillery building lay, in splendid isolation, in a cup in the hills.

Glenlivet lies at the end of a long narrow valley running into the Cairngorms. And it is, in fact, to this circumstance that it owes its fame.

It was in this mountain fastness that the Highlanders upheld to the last their right to distil their ancient "water of life," their *uisgebeatha*, free from the prying attentions of the English king's Excisemen. From the secret stills in the depths of the valley, pack horses carried the illicit potions over the mountains to the towns of the Lowlands.

Customs Won

In 1824, the most successful of the smugglers, one George Smith, a farmer's son, capitulated to the Excise invaders. But the fame of his cordial did not die with his licence.

Though today the jangling keys of the "cursed horse-leeches of the Excise" resound through the valley, George Smith's descendant still dispenses the waters of the glen, and the fifty gallons a week which came from his "bothy" in the year after Waterloo has grown to seven thousand.

Glenlivet is back to its first full season since the war. The stills, which were cold through the two seasons from 1942 to 1944, are bubbling again, producing mainly for the countries with hard currency.

And for thirsty Britons, who now get two million gallons where, in 1939, they had nearly seven million? Not, at the moment, much more than promises, but promises backed by something approaching full peacetime production.

From the whole of Scotland, in 1939, came 29.1 million gallons of whisky. With the first year of the war, production dropped to a third, and in the following year to nearly a third of that. Then in 1941-42 the supply dried up entirely. The grain was diverted; the stills went cold.

Filling Up

Now the warehouses are filling up again. Glenlivet is busy with its quota.

Glenlivet's distillery buildings had a clean mountain air about them: they fitted the picture perfectly. The path wound up through a herd of black Aberdeen Angus. Like George Smith the First, Captain W. H. Smith Grant, a gentle-voiced kilted giant of a man, combines his distilling with farming. He presides over his Highland domain from the big white house just in front of the distillery.

In the cobbled yard James McRobbie, cooper, lines up his butts, hogsheads and quarters for the afternoon's filling. "That's a Johnny Haig . . . that's a plain oak . . . a sherry cask over there. . . ." They're all old friends to him.

Casks are a problem. Normally sherry casks are favoured for maturing whisky, giving it colour and flavour. But today the sherry producers have presented an ultimatum: no casks returned, no wine. The big whisky firms fill the gap by specially wine-treating casks: but it isn't quite the same,

And tradition here is nearly everything. Distillery managers do not learn their art at technical schools. They inherit it, learn by doing. No trade has so many ritualistic mysteries: so little formulated theory.

A warm brown carpet covers the vast floor of the Malt Barn. The carpet is germinating barley. Men plying wide wooden shovels with long curving handles advance in line across the carpet. The golden sprouting grain flies through the dim shafts of light. Swish! Swish! One step forward, one step back. There is a rhythm in it captivating to the eye.

"There's some can never get the swing of it," says Alec Grant, maltman here for thirty years.

Heats Itself

At one end of the Malt Barn the barley, fresh from soaking in the steep, is piled thirty inches high, generating heat by its own germination. "Wonderful, you know, the vitality packed into a grain of barley," says Manager Watt. "It'll get up to sixty degrees quite quickly, even in thirty degrees of frost that we get here sometimes."

As germination develops, the grain is spread out. For twelve days it moves across the floor under the maltmen's flying shovels, over and over, over and over, day and night. "A lazy man will ne'er do for a maltman," says Grant.

From the far end of the floor he picked a sprouting grain and, laying it on his palm, pointed to the dark shadow of the acrospire, the nascent blade. The shadow stretched three-quarters of the way along the grain. It had completed the process of transmutation, starch into sugar, Man assisting Nature.

Lyrical about Peat

For three days the barley lies on the wire floor of the kiln as the peat smoke weaves and twists through the grains, setting the stamp of the Highlands upon them, curling slowly up through the pagoda top of the kiln.

Whisky men get lyrical about peat—peat made resinous from the roots of pine trees, peat "free from all minerological impregnations," peat from this famous "moss" or that. Glenlivet's peat, piled neat and high outside the distillery, is cut from Faemussach moss during the three summer months when it's too hot for barley to germinate properly and distilling closes down.

Is it the peat? Is that the secret of Scotch? "Well, now, yes, maybe. . . ." And then they send you off up the hillside above the distillery, through the black-

Cooper James McRobbie and an Exciseman checking evaporation with dip-stick. Four per cent is lost first year, two per cent following years

John Bull photographs by William Kemp

Pagoda-like towers of Glenlivet distillery are drying kilns. Smoke from peat (seen stacked outside) gives distinctive flavour to whisky grains

again

oung yet, and lots

by HARRY HOPKINS

faced sheep and across a field till you come to a place where a couple of yards of ground are fenced off. In the middle of the space is a large flat stone. Stand quietly for a moment, and beneath the stone you can hear a distant rippling.

It is the Glenlivet spring, the soft lime-free water spurting icy and sparkling from the granite, another item in the whisky mystery. "Lovely water, makes your teeth dirrrl," says Mrs. Watt, wife of Glenlivet's manager.

Piped down the mountainside, the water mixes with the ground malted barley, is fermented with yeast in huge tubs called "backs," foaming and erupting grotesquely. Here the odour of alcohol rises to a new pungency. No one has been known to get drunk on it, but you can, they say, get a "verra sore head."

Age-old Method

And so to the stillhouse, the heart of the matter. In the dark copper gleam of these bulbous Byzantine domes lies more than a hint of the days when George Smith fought his running war against the Excise. The fundamentals are unchanged, only the scale is different. A ball, hanging from a chain, rests against the larger still. By the sound it gives as it hits the neck, the stillman can gauge how high the "wash" is boiling.

Here, in this big kitchen of a place, the traditionalism of the whisky men reaches its peak. Every still has its own peculiarities of shape and size. No one can tell you precisely what these variations do to the whisky, yet no distiller in his senses would dream of changing them by so much as half an inch.

When some time ago Glenlivet's seventy-year-old still was to be replaced, the coppersmith from Edinburgh spent two days measuring up the curves. Even then, to be on the safe side, the old still's head was fitted on to the reproduction.

All round the clock the stills are tended. This is Charlie Bremner's turn. The six-hour distillation is complete. Bremner turns a brass tap and, clear and colourless, the whisky rises in the testing glass in the spirit safe. He reads off the hydrometer, then turns another tap, switching the flow into the spirit receiver.

So Near—

This "spirit safe," symbol of the modern whisky man's absolute subjection to the Excise, is a glass case. Through it the stillman can watch and control his liquor-in-the-making without being able to get at a drop of it. Two big brass locks hang on each end of it. And only the Exciseman has the keys.

There was a time when it was the custom to "dramm" the men with the product of their labours. Now this is illegal, though, as one Highlander observes to me, it's "hard to work among the sweeties and ne'er taste one."

Complete Scottish distilleries have been shipped to Australia and America—but whatever else they may have been the results have not been Scotch whisky. One whisky man swore to me that you could build identical distilleries on opposite sides of the same road, supply both with the same water, barley and peat, and yet one would turn out good whisky and one poor whisky

In his little office behind the big scale, Mr. Robertson, the Excise Officer, is weighing casks. First they weigh each cask empty, then full from the big black-and-white striped vat.

Excisemen live on the job in a house the distillery must provide for them. They must be on hand at every key operation in the distillery round.

As the hogsheads roll off the scale, Cooper McRobbie stencils on their ends the final digit of the gallons content figure. It'll be 1956 most likely before these casks come out of the warehouse again. The warehouse doors are double locked. The duty on a single cask is £1,200. There are cool millions for the Exchequer stowed away in these unimpressive sheds in the mountains.

More For Us?

There is also the promise of whisky to come for Britain. Not until the stocks are built up to their prewar level can we hope for more whisky at home. By law, whisky must mature for three years. In practice it remains untapped in the cask for something like ten.

All this time it will be losing bulk by evaporation at a rate of four per cent the first year and two to two and a half per cent in succeeding years.

In the meantime only ten and a half million gallons a year are being released: eight and a half million for export, and only two million (instead of the prewar 6.9 million) for the United Kingdom.

From the pine-clad Banffshire valleys the scene shifts to the steaming canals and smoke-blackened canyons of Glasgow. A little man with bushy eyebrows sits in front of a row of small square-shouldered bottles. He pours half an inch from one into a narrow-topped glass, swills it around, raising it to his nose. He sniffs long and carefully.

Words Fail

Ask him what he is looking for and he cannot put it into words. He just knows. He's had time to know, for he came here as a boy over fifty years ago. Only experience can make a blender. To compose his blend he may draw on whiskies of different years from forty or fifty Highland glens. Generally he will include a little from one of the nine distilleries on the wild wind-swept Isles of Islay, unique for their richness and strong "peat-reek."

It is to its elusive "unscientific" imperfections that Scotch whisky owes its unique position. But if science was held at bay in the Highland glen it triumphantly pushed up into the Lowlands.

In 1831 a restless Excise officer named Aeneas Coffey invented a patent still which by a continuous process manufactured whisky quicker and more cheaply than the traditional pot-still of the Highlands.

Certain astute Scottish business men began to take an interest. As whisky grew more and more fashionable and moved across the Border, the labels which were to turn several enterprising small grocers into multi-millionaires bore the devices not of the Highland distilleries but of Lowland blenders

Today only a few distilleries bottle their own product for a decreasing number of faithful old customers, mostly in Scotland itself. They used to boast that, unlike the relatively tasteless "silent" whisky of the patent stills, the old Highland "malts" "went down singing hymns." Now they're voted too heavy.

So today, the blend is approximately fifty per cent of Highland whisky to an equal amount of Lowland brew, though the proportions vary with each make.

There are, they say, four thousand blends of Scotch whisky. To maintain its unique world reputation while at the same time rebuilding the aged stocks demands a nice balance of strategy and tactics.

Local "Witchery"

It is important to Britain that that balance should be struck, for as a dollar producer—for years our biggest—Scotch whisky is all that Dr. Cripps ordered. With a little ancient apparatus, twenty or thirty men apiece and their own local brand of witchcraft, the ninety-odd Highland distilleries can turn every pound's worth of barley they receive into fifty dollars' worth of imports—with one third of the barley left over for cattle-feed into the bargain.

But for Britons, though this is the Highlands' first full season since 1939, the most significant feature of the distilleries is likely to remain the massive double locks on the warehouse doors.

Highland whisky goes down "singing hymns." Lowland brews are "silent." There are four thousand blends in all

FREE SPEECH

Letters this week on householders who ask "premiums"; military war criminals; bachelors who want to marry

WHILE HUNDREDS of thousands are homeless, enormous numbers of flats and houses stand empty—because their owners hold out for high "premiums."

Unless the Government steps in and curbs this racket, there will always be a large amount of habitable accommodation out of circulation. Make such payments illegal (under whatever pretext they are demanded) and flats would never stand idle more than a day or two. Any measure which can ease our acute housing shortage is worth adopting, even if it is difficult to put it into practice.—R. J., London, S.E.24. (Full name and address enclosed.)

Those German Generals

Roger Page

THE ARTICLE by C. E. Bechhofer Roberts, "Time Doesn't Whitewash War Crimes" (JOHN BULL, December 4), didn't convince me that it is right to try these German generals after their long imprisonment. They have been jailed for years without a charge being formulated—and British jurisdiction does *not* allow that.

What does he mean by saying that no soldier should obey orders he knows to be criminal? To destroy a house is "criminal" in civil life, but a soldier often has to do it. The soldier is taught to obey without question.—ROGER PAGE, 53 Greencourt Road, Petts Wood, Orpington, Kent.

When the Blind Travel

THE LARGER BUS companies in Scotland grant blind people a privilege ticket entitling them to half fares, whether they travel on business or pleasure.

The railway companies permit a blind person to travel with his guide for the price of one whole fare for the two—but only for business journeys. Perhaps now that the blind are part owners of British Railways something can be done about extending this privilege to all journeys.—A. G., Inverness. (Full name and address enclosed.)

Left it in the Bus

MY WIFE recently left her handbag on a bus. As soon as she arrived home I telephoned to London Transport office at Hatfield garage and was advised to ring again when the bus had returned. On doing so, I was told that the bag had been found and that I could collect it in the morning.

I did so—and it cost me 7s. 6d. Returning it had entailed no expense to London Transport, so why should I be charged so exorbitantly for the return of a lost article?—S. G. BOWYER, "The Retreat," Oaklands Rise, Welwyn, Herts.

Born in a Taxi

A FEW NIGHTS AGO I was involved in an emergency maternity case. The expectant mother and I travelled six miles by taxi to the hospital, and despite the fact that I implored the driver to hurry the baby was born on the way.

There must surely be many other cases in which private cars are used instead of ambulances. Why isn't there a special signal which would distinguish vehicles being used for this purpose and give them the right of way as does an ambulance's bell?

At times like these every minute counts and an inconvenient traffic signal might mean disaster.—MISS MABEL STONE, The Downs, Wright's Green, Little Hollingbury, Bishop's Stortford, Herts.

Don't Leave Children . . .

YOUR CORRESPONDENT, N. Howitt, who wrote (JOHN BULL, December 4) that his wife was wrong in refusing to accompany him on an evening's outing, so leaving the children by themselves, is himself wrong.

Parents who leave children under sixteen years of age by themselves are open to much criticism. Besides the fact that children may wake suddenly and be frightened, there is always the danger of fire.—ARNOLD RANSON, Probation Officer, 23 Portland Place, Mottram Road, Stalybridge, Cheshire.

. . . But be Reasonable

WHILE MRS. N. HOWITT'S devotion to her children should be admired, I wonder if she has considered the great risk she is taking when refusing to go out with her husband in the evenings.

When my four kiddies were young, nothing would induce me to leave them. My husband begged me to accompany him time after time, but I put the children first. Eventually he found enjoyment in other company, and when the children were old enough to be left, I found myself unwanted by my husband.

I often regret that I did not ask an obliging neighbour to stay in while I went out with my husband. — REGRETFUL, Staffs. (Full name and address enclosed.)

A Mother Remembers

AS A LONELY OLD WOMAN I have all the time in the world to brood over my memories and realize that I gave up too much of my life to my children.

I had ten children, and while they were home they were "good." I did not smoke or drink. I worked for them when they were young, cobbled their shoes, made all their clothes.

Everything was fine, then. They were never going to forget the "best mother in the world."

But talk is easy. Now they have all gone. Seven of them are married, but, except when they want something, I never see or hear of them.—FORSAKEN MOTHER, Co. Durham. (Full name and address enclosed.)

Plenty of Girls

I AM VERY SORRY for the young man who signed himself "Bachelor," Durham (JOHN BULL, December 4). At the same time, unless he is a hermit it seems an extraordinary thing that he cannot find a wife in a country over-populated with women!

There are hundreds of young women who are only too anxious to marry, so I do not think that at the age of twenty-eight he has any need to despair. A clergyman or a marriage guidance centre might be able to help him.—SPINSTER, London, N.W.1. (Full name and address enclosed.)

Ideas Need Brightening

"BACHELOR," Durham, whose Christmas dinner last year was bread and jam, and who fears that this year will see a repetition of that diet, doesn't need or deserve a wife.

If he hasn't the gumption to get in some pork pie, chops, or at least sausages, with appropriate vegetables, and cake and buns to follow, he deserves to stick to his bread and jam. It is shiftless, unenterprising numskulls like "Bachelor" who get hold of decent girls and expect everything from them.

Let him brighten up his ideas a bit, do a bit of intelligent shopping, try cooking, baking, even sewing, and some lass may look his way.—SEVENTY, Leeds. (Full name and address enclosed.)

Commercial Travellers

ANYONE WHO THINKS he has the capacity for the job can seek employment as a sales representative or as a commercial traveller.

It is from these inexperienced applicants that unscrupulous firms such as the one which dismissed your correspondent, R. H. C., after he had secured a few orders (JOHN BULL, December 4), get their victims.

The Government could help to alleviate this state of affairs by providing some system of registration and licensing for bona fide commercial travellers.—W. H. Mason, Vice-President, National Union of Commercial Travellers, 46 Linkstor Road, Woolton, Liverpool.

Where British Nurses Win

Miss M. Morrison

TREATMENT OF nurses in Britain cannot be compared to that in America, as Norman Hillson pointed out in his most interesting article, "Where a Nurse is Quite Somebody" (JOHN BULL, December 4).

All the same, as a pupil assistant nurse, I wouldn't care to change places. In the U.S. students do not receive any pay; in fact, in some States they may have to pay to be trained. Assistant nurses in Britain receive £200 per annum with meals provided on duty.—MISS MYRA MORRISON, 78 Kensington, Liverpool, 7.

Discipline is Needed

THE NURSING PROFESSION derives its discipline from the religious orders of the Church, and also many of its titles, such as "sister" and "matron." It is a mistake to think young women can be trained as nurses without discipline.—REV. B. H. PRESTON, The Vicarage, Annesley Woodhouse, Notts.

Blame the Parents

PEOPLE WHO TODAY still stigmatize illegitimate children should bear in mind the classic observation of an American columnist.

"There are no such things as illegitimate children," he said; "only illegitimate parents."—J. D. FRANKLYN, 36 Lancaster Road, Southport, Lancs.

Mayor and the Pauper

I SHOULD LIKE to record the following kindly act which took place recently. The mayor and mayoress of this town, motoring down a main street, were held up outside the workhouse to let a funeral car go by. Noticing that there were no mourners the mayor ordered his car to follow the hearse to the cemetery, and he and his wife stood by the grave and paid respect to the unknown dead. Surely a gracious deed in these days of thoughtless living.—MISS L. E., Scarborough, Yorks. (Full name and address enclosed.)

Off Parade

WHAT MY HUSBAND wasn't going to do to his sergeant-major if he ever had the misfortune to meet him again!

A few days ago, the sergeant-major called. He enjoyed his tea. He appreciated the fire. And I hope that the ten shillings my husband forced on him before he left will help tide him over until he gets another break.—MRS. F. L. B., Mitcham, Surrey. (Full name and address enclosed.)

Heard This One?

IN GLASGOW, I HEARD an amusing but unprintable story based on the recent Lynskey Tribunal. Two days later in Plymouth I heard the same yarn.

Now that story wasn't printed, and certainly wasn't broadcast over the radio, yet it obviously swept the country. And some people still doubt the possibilities of word-of-mouth propaganda!—JAMES HUMPHREYS, 98 Weston Street, Nechells, Birmingham, 7.

Put Him Off Breakfast

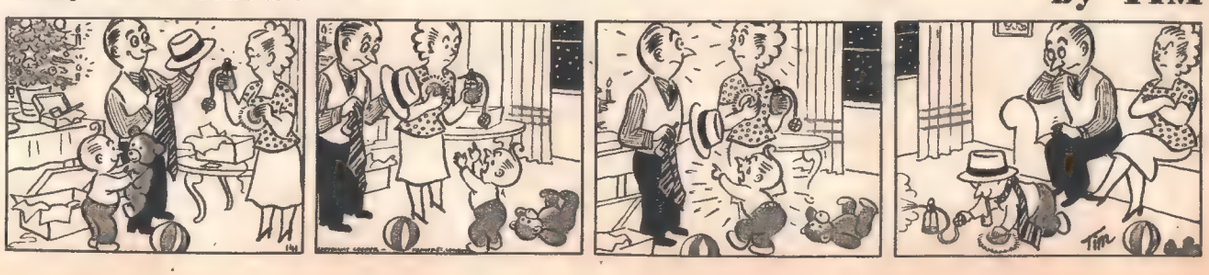
WHY DOES THE B.B.C. allow the Radio Doctor to go into the unsavoury details of human ailments just when most people are having their breakfast?

The other day I was enjoying spaghetti on toast when he began a leisurely and detailed description of the various types of worm that infest the human bowel. I switched off the set, but still couldn't face that spaghetti.—R. J. DAVIS, 364 Bricknell Avenue, Hull.

Because of space shortage only a limited selection of the many readers' letters submitted can be printed. If your views are squeezed out, it does not mean that they have been overlooked by the Editor. For every letter used, John Bull pays one guinea. Letters should be marked "Free Speech" and carry the full name and address of sender for publication.

OH, JOHNNY!

by TIM



Our rule on fouls needs changing

by ALAN HOBY

In Britain, below-the-belt blows imply bad sportsmanship. The problem, however, is not as straightforward as that

THE RECENT BIG FIGHT fiasco, when the American, Lee Savold, lost to Bruce Woodcock on an apparent foul, not only proved what a vital difference there is in the rules governing British and American boxing. It strikingly — and painfully — demonstrated the differences in style and technique.

In England, the over-all emphasis is on the straight left, both as a defensive and offensive weapon. This is usually followed by the right cross to the jaw. These are the accepted "one-two" punches of the average British fighter.

The Americans have a totally different outlook. They concentrate on *attack to the body*. The standby punch there is the left hook to the liver or stomach.

This is the punch with which Savold "softened up" Woodcock. American trainers consider it to be the most damaging and lethal in the business.

So do I. It was evolved through a long line of great fighters, although you don't see it much in evidence over here—at least not among our big men.

Dempsey, Tunney, Baksi

Jack Dempsey, who had the "killer" instinct more highly developed than any other heavyweight champion of the world before or since, had a tigerish left hook which he followed up with a terrible short right to the head or jaw.

Gene Tunney practised and perfected a wicked right that used to land just beneath the heart. It was a paralysing punch.

Joe Baksi, who ended Woodcock's dream of winning the world heavyweight title, had a whole variety of punches, including his favourite left hook which broke Woodcock's jaw.

The difference in British and American technique was thrown into contrast by the Woodcock-Savold affair. Woodcock's sole weapon was a straight left plus a right cross which he landed once. Savold, on the other hand, continually bore in, weaving and shifting in his rolling, and taking Woodcock's long lefts to the face with impunity. The American's set idea was "to get inside," and, once there, to rip home his favourite left hook to the more vulnerable parts of Bruce's body.

When Savold slings his left, the blow never travels more than six to ten inches. He shortens it at the last second with a sharp twist of the wrist. Not only is it a dig with dynamite in it. It is the very spirit of aggression, just as the straight left is the outward symbol of a predominantly defensive outlook.

Savold never wastes blows on the air, and he has a wide range of punches to draw on. Woodcock, on the other hand, has only three really good punches. And, although the British champion won, writhing on the canvas, Savold was the master.

The Constant Cry

Basically, which is the better method? The American or the British?

Bill Daly, Savold's manager, concedes: "The average run of British boys are as tough as they make them. They last better than the Yankee kids of the same age, who are frequently over-fed.

"But," he adds, "your British trainers are handicapped by the fact that they can't teach your boys to throw punches to *the body*. The constant chatter of referees and officials in your country is 'Keep them up, keep them up.' Your fighters are afraid to attack the body in case they are disqualified. If this is allowed to go on, it will ruin the fight game over here, as it nearly did in the States until we brought in the 'no-foul' rule."

Is he right? Should we adopt the American "no-foul" rule over here? Many experts think along similar lines to Daly. We have magnificent material but how many of our boxers are properly built up around the solar plexus region?

Woodcock is helped to corner after going down to punch that disqualified Savold. This sort of unhappy victory can't happen in U.S.

The "no-foul" rule was introduced in America eighteen years ago because more and more boxers were winning bouts on disqualifications. Low blows became so prevalent that the confidence of the average American fight follower rapidly evaporated—and the boxing fan everywhere is the man on whom the prosperity of the fight game depends.

Under the rule, every boxer must enter the ring wearing a foulproof protector. This is similar to the "cups" which were worn by both Savold and Woodcock in their contest. After that fight I watched a "cup" kicked and hammered by a colleague. It seemed to have no effect on the wearer.

In America, "cups" are considered 100 per cent hurt-proof.

Under the "no-foul" rule, no bout is terminated simply because of low hitting. But if a fighter hits low he loses the round. If he continues to punch below the belt he loses the fight and runs the risk of incurring a hefty suspension. The referee can also disqualify a boxer in the event of a major foul.

The Americans claim that the "no-foul" rule has greatly reduced the number of low blows struck, and has eliminated the unhappy spectacle of a boxer writhing in pain on the canvas, yet winning on a disqualification.

May Cold-shoulder Us

Those who wish to introduce the rule, or an Anglicized version of it, over here, support their arguments by stating that if we refuse to move with the times, no American champion will ever again be willing to stake his world crown in a contest in this country—whatever the financial inducement. It is also asserted that we are breeding a race of heavyweights who can't take it "underneath." Body-punching as an art, they declare, is fast disappearing from British boxing.

Opponents of the "no-foul" rule point out that it is un-British and "not cricket" to hit another man below the belt. As far back as 1934, the British Boxing Board of Control rejected the rule on the grounds that "any such rule is entirely unnecessary and calculated to do immeasurable harm as it strikes at the very foundation of boxing. . . ."

Amplifying that statement the other day, Charles Donnall, B.B.B.C. secretary, declared in effect that the "no-foul" rule did not apply over here as boxing in this country was "a sport and not a business, as in America."

But money surely is the basis of professional pugilism in any country.

Certainly we must devise some means of stopping unsatisfactory finishes to big fights. And to do that we must recognize that the "no-foul" rule has grown up *because of* the basic difference between the American and British techniques.

Let's Give it a Trial

As time goes on it appears that more and more countries are adopting the American style, and I believe that if we wish to win world titles we shall have more and more to adopt the American style of training and fighting.

This in its turn, of course, is bound to lead to a modification of the present boxing rules. Regrettable though it may seem, I am in favour of an extended trial of the "no-foul" rule in this country.

I know this will arouse howls of rage from the purists, but if we are not to be left behind I can see no other way.

There is no reason at all why the American punching techniques should not be grafted on to the *present* British style.

We have stacks of good boxers—even heavyweights. But we cannot afford to produce boxers, however good, whose abdominal muscles cannot stand up to a hard belting.

The jacaranda

Determined, aggressive, the wheeling birds of prey added a final macabre touch to the horrors that the two women had to share amid the wreckage

by H. E. BATES

ILLUSTRATED BY K. J. PETTS

SPLITTING OF THE escape party from Burma into two has led to disaster. Portman, speeding along the dusty road, loses control of his car, which plunges over an escarpment.

Connie, Mrs. McNairn's daughter, whose feelings for Paterson have up to now conflicted with her loyalty to the more orthodox British "set," believes she is the only survivor of the crash. This has a strange effect on her. Despite the shock of her mother's death, the accident represents for her the breaking of ties with people whom she has found hypocritical and smug.

Feeling that she can now face up to Paterson in her own right, she realizes that she must link up with his group—consisting, apart from himself, of Nadia, the Burmese girl, her brother, Tuesday, who is Paterson's house boy, and the Eurasian nurse, Miss Allison.

When Paterson drives up and learns from Connie of the accident, he insists on making sure there are no other survivors, and arranges to go down the escarpment where the wreckage of Portman's car lies.

Down there, unknown to Paterson and Connie, Mrs. Betteson, who also escaped injury, is tending the badly hurt Mrs. Portman amid the wreckage. This is a strange reversal of the rôles of the two women in the easygoing life of Burma before the Japanese menace. Then Mrs. Betteson's eccentricities made her a figure of fun for such people as the lovely Mrs. Portman.

But, in this emergency, Mrs. Betteson acts with remarkable sanity, although, alone in the defile with a gravely injured woman, it seems doubtful whether she can hold out much longer against the heat and the vultures that hover menacingly over the wreckage of the car containing the bodies of the two husbands, Portman and Betteson.

PART VII

The Vultures Attack

JUST before nine o'clock the next morning Mrs. Betteson saw the first vulture actually trying to get into the car. It was trying to force its neck into the aperture left in the front window.

On the smooth cellulosed metal and on the glass it floundered like a seal on wet rocks, falling back into the sand. Then it sat there like a bald, evil turkey, uncurling its powerful rubbery neck, giving ponderous flutters of grey wings as it got ready to spring.

When it did spring it flew upward and came clumsily to rest on the tilted bonnet of the car. Again the smoothness of polished metal would not hold it and it fell heavily down.

As it sat once again in the dust, wings twitching, it was joined by another. They floundered for a moment and then rose, attacking the car. They could find no hold and fell against each other, grey bodies slithering on smooth metal. Flat on the air the sound of beaten wings, opened to break the fall and closed again, had a sound of exasperated power.

And then the two birds were joined by three others. In two or three minutes, after more attacks, they learned where they could perch on the car. They sat on the wheels, on the running board, on the fenders, on the bonnet.

They attacked once again the aperture of the window. They thrust into it necks that were like lengths of rubber hose. Exasperated, they made croaking noises as they began fighting for the aperture, three at a time, two from below and a third, head down, acrobatically, from above. The third had no sooner got its head into the window than its feet began to slide. The whole enormous body swung down by the neck, feet clawing wildly for grip. The wings beat the air with terrific lashings.

For a second the bird hung by its neck, half throttled, and then it recovered. Its feet found the handle of the door and pressed on it in panic, bringing the whole weight of the body upward. The handle was forced down. It gave a click of release and went back, and the vulture dragged its neck at the window and fell.

But the door was open, and the weight of it falling back was too small to shut it completely again. There remained about an inch of unclosed space. Instantaneously the birds began to claw at it, frantically, with enraged greed, claws whistling, until at last by sheer power the space was opened and the door was swinging back.

Mrs. Betteson, sitting with Mrs. Portman under the shelter of bamboo, watched it all through her cracked spectacles.

Over the end of the bamboo shelter she hung Portman's dungarees, so that the whole affair was shut away from both Mrs. Portman and herself. But every now and then, out of the corner of her eye, against her will, she caught sight of more birds arriving and probing into the car.

She sat for some time like this, watching over Mrs. Portman and then, in a hypnotic sort of way, the vultures. Mrs. Portman's speech had not come back. As the sun rose the smell of decay rose, too, and soon even the woman lying under the canopy of bamboo and dungarees knew of it and was sickened. And as the sickness rose up in her the light went out of her, so that the eyes, staring upward, seemed already dead.

Mrs. Betteson sat heavily troubled behind her spectacles. The tea-making of the previous day had not been a success. She had wasted water because the tin can had tipped over; she had had to make two extravagant boilings.

And then, much worse, she had had sense enough to remember in time that Mrs. Portman, with an injured stomach, certainly ought not to drink fluid in any quantity. And in the small doses Mrs. Betteson gave her to wet her mouth she had not possibly been able to tell the difference between water and tea.

In a sense it had all been wasted. So at sunset she had let the fire go out. The last scalding hours of the afternoon had been full of wheeling jungle crows and the noise of a coppersmith bird. It had tapped with its metallic voice somewhere in the higher trees beyond the belt of bamboo. With its infuriating, ringing repetition, worse even than the heat and the glare and the ripening odour from the car, it had almost driven her mad.

And now, suddenly, it began again. Once started, it was like the vultures and the sun. It would go relentlessly on until darkness, like something pecking with a little hammer at her brain.

It was that disquieting bird that decided her to make another fire. She had to do something with her hands.

And she had no sooner begun to collect wood than she felt more cheerful.

Then for the first time Mrs. Portman spoke to her. Shocked and weak, she spoke of the dungarees. A crow had swept down, picked them up, then dropped them from a height of ten or twenty feet in the air. She saw in the familiar dirty trousers an association of terror with the dead Portman. They came down like a dark, floating ghost of the man.

THE shock of it brought back her voice. And Mrs. Betteson was glad. It seemed to bring back a touch of beauty, through the mere sparkle of spoken terror, to the face that had always seemed to her so lovely, even in its aloofness, whenever she had seen it on the flowered terraces of the swimming pool.

"Where have you been? Why did you go?" asked Mrs. Portman.

"Making a fire."

"Don't go. Stay here."

"No. I won't go."

"Stay here. Talk to me, will you?"

Mrs. Betteson squatted down. She sat so that Mrs. Portman could not see the car, intercepting with her body and its flabby drawers and bodice her line of sight.

She sat there for the rest of the morning, fanning the heat from Mrs. Portman's face, wetting her lips, gently talking of the pleasant, narrow, vanished life of the town: a life that she had never taken part in except as a flabby and unwanted spectator. And as she sat there talking she thought of Mrs. Portman — the beautiful and aloof Mrs. Portman, with her splendid figure—doing a swallow dive at the Swimming Club.

Betteson had once called her the goddess. It suited her very well. You never saw her there at the club without a man other than Portman ordering her a dish of ice-cream or a drink or tea or a chicken sandwich as she sat aloofly under the gay umbrellas at the side of the pool.

And as she sat there mechanically fanning Mrs. Portman's face Mrs. Betteson saw the lovely figure lying on the darkened grass and it seemed to come out of the past to mock her bitterly. She could not bear the thought of its dying there now, irrevocably smashed, the beauty of it gone, in that putrid, ghastly indecency of heat and decay.

She moved to touch Mrs. Portman with the greatest tenderness and found herself crying instead.

Something came down and struck darkly and swiftly at the side of her face. She staggered about and saw half-blindly the rising jungle crow that had flown down, with predatory cheek, to attack her. She stood trembling and crying in the sun, blind, wiping her spectacles.

The crow came down again, darkly swooping. She waved her hands and the flashing spectacles made glassy-gold circles about her face. And then in a second the crow seized the spectacles in its beak, pulling with frightening strength. She clutched the spectacles, weeping and terrified. She could feel the horny beak of the crow tightening on her spectacles and then on her fingers so that she could not let go.

The crow was making a sort of guttural chawk-chawking noise, half throttled. She groped blindly and in great fear, and then, directed by the sound, she had the crow by the neck. She felt its body warm and loathsome under the slippery feathers. The notion of losing her spectacles gave her suddenly the most murderous desperation, and she seized the crow with both hands. It gave powerful, steely flappings with its wings against her face, but she clung with fierce craziness to its neck, and in another minute she had fallen down, with the crow underneath her. Then she pressed down with her hands until the neck of the bird was buried in dust and she could hear the choked chawk-chawking of its big throat no longer.

It still had the spectacles in its mouth when it died. She took them away from it and put them on. In the struggle the cracked segment of the left lens had fallen out, so that now when she looked out from them that small upper triangle of her vision was blurred. Almost mercifully it cut off the hideous happenings in the car.

She crawled on her knees, panting terribly, bathed in heavy and weakening sweat, bludgeoned by sun, crazily stricken and stupefied. And then the dead crow gave a great convulsive flutter of reflexed power with its wings. It frightened her so that she stood suddenly up. And then so that it should not happen again she stamped on the crow with both feet until it was nothing but black and crimson pulp in the hot dust beneath her.

CRYING and trembling, she decided to light the fire she had made earlier in the day. She bent down against the mass of heaped bamboo and clutched her spectacles, focusing with the good lens the light and heat of the sun. She almost laughed when it worked like a trick.

Then as it began to burn she thought of something else. She remembered the can of oil from the car. She ran to fetch it, and in the moment before the flames leapt up she poured it on. In

tree

the heat it was very thin, like honey, and it began to burn at once, darkening the flame with wreaths of dirty smoke.

In anger she picked up the dead crow and threw that, too, with the oil-can, into the fire. The smoke rose to the height of the wheeling crows and with the rising heat seemed to push them suddenly upward in a black canopy, cawing in panic, out of range.

In the car the vultures became aware of it, too, and beat with talons and wings at the fire-reflecting glass, making gorged noises of quarrelling alarm, faces at the windows staring out like swollen and bloody turkeys, trapped and caged.

When she could bear the sight and smell and heat no longer she went back to Mrs. Portman. She felt a great sense of triumph as she squatted down. Even in the great heat of noon the smell of burning bamboo and smoke and feathers had the delicious pungency of a disinfectant, and she felt at last that she had beaten, even in a little way, the birds, the stench and the sun.

In the same moment she saw that a great change had come over Mrs. Portman.

In the same moment she saw that a woman was dying. The grey light had come back to the face, which had no reality in its weakness, and there was no sweat on the dry skin.

The cloud of smoke closed over the two of them as she lay down. She had nothing to say, and she simply rested her face against the face of Mrs. Portman as they lay together.

EVEN in that moment she could feel the beauty of it. The skin was lovely to touch in its unblemished silkiness. Against it her own face had the clumsiness and ugliness of a misshapen knuckle-bone.

She stroked her cheek backwards and forwards on Mrs. Portman's cheek, partly in comfort, partly in the sheer tired joy of its tenderness.

The face for a moment turned to her but it had no strength, and all that happened was that the lips rested, cold and lovely and speechless, against her own.

Out in the clearing the fire, dark and bright, burned itself away. Every now and then oil smoke rose above the height of the bamboos, keeping the wheeling crows away. It was thick enough sometimes to conceal for a moment, with churning orange clouds, the glitter of sun, and it burned like that for about half an hour after Mrs. Portman had died.

It was not until then that Paterson, Tuesday and the Naga boy who was guiding them saw it from about a mile up the valley.

PATERSON decided to remain in the village another two nights and a day, resting Mrs. Betteson and Connie McNairn.

In the heat of the afternoon Mrs. Betteson, Miss McNairn and Miss Allison rested in a hut. Paterson overhauled the car. While he cleaned the plugs, checked the timing and set the carburettor, Tuesday worked under the chassis with the grease-pump and then checked over the tyre-pressures. He had become very adept with the gauge.

Large-eyed, pale-brown faces crowned with greased black top-knots gathered about him all that afternoon as he pressed the gauge against the valve-nipples. They jumped and laughed at the little silver snake that hissed when he held its small, fat head against the wheel.

All the time Tuesday moved from wheel to wheel with the proud, condescending calm of an engineer working among great mechanical intricacies.

It was only when he actually took hold of the pump and began putting air into the tyres that he dropped the attitude of condescending lightness. The pump was a serious affair. He pushed the brown, peering faces back. He became like a man who seeks elbow room for an important demonstration.

Sometimes he leaned back, resting on the handle of the pump, and spoke casually to Paterson in English. If the air gauge and the pump gave him something of the esteem of the engineer, the use of a strange, unknown language turned him into a figure that was fabulous.

He was aware of this. His smile broadened marvellously. He knew himself to be the central focus of all the dumb, laughterless eyes.

"Offside back is spare wheel, Patson. Change it back?"

"How worn is it?"

"Second spare, Patson. Not too good."

"Better change it."

"Yes, Patson, yes. Change it now. Change it right away."

He rose with masculine offhandedness, wiping his hands on an oily rag. As he walked round to the boot of the car to get the wheel jack the little brown moon-procession of faces pressed about him tightly.

Aware of it, he peered for several moments into the boot, as if contemplating hidden workings. All the faces came to peer, too. He picked up a wrench, weighed it for a moment in his hands, then dropped it. He wiped the sweat from his face with the back of his hand.

Then he picked up the jack. It was as if he had picked up an explosive weapon. It was as much as he could lift, but he held it casually, as one used to holding such trivialities. He swung it about with easy importance, and the children stood back.

And then, as he saw the axle rise and the wheel lift itself from the ground and the children kneeling there to watch it all, he knew that he had scored a triumph. The tyre gauge was simply fun. But the jack, the raising of the car, was a miracle. A wonderful thing. Wiping

Suddenly Paterson entered the tent and stood over her talking. She found herself telling him a frantic lie

his hands once again on the oily rag, smiling, he knew that the whole affair had given him great prestige.

"Tuesday!" Paterson called.

"Yes, Patson! Yes, sir."

"When you've got the wheel on go and get tea. I'm as hot as hell."

"Yes, Patson, yes. Quick as hell!"

"Bad word!"

"Yes, Patson."

Once again the short exchange of words raised him in the eyes of the watching faces. He put on the new wheel, swivelling the wheel-brace with careless deftness. All the time he felt that he was no longer a small boy. Now, because of Paterson, through Paterson, and by reason of the things Paterson had taught him, he was a person of grown stature.

He was very happy and very important; he was immensely above the childish peering faces, the poor hill creatures who could not read the figures on a gauge or lift the two-ton weight of the great car with one hand.

IN the morning Paterson drove slowly forward into curtains of sulphur fog.

He had rearranged the seating in the car. There were now six of them. In the back Miss Allison sat between Nadia and Connie McNairn and sometimes, as he glanced up into the driving mirror and saw them reflected there, Paterson could not see much difference, under that high cream-dusty light, in the colour of the three faces.

In the back of the car Connie McNairn was afraid. She was trying to think of ways to beat Miss Allison's thermometer. She had begun to feel more and more ill, and sometimes when the car rose on the edge of a larger pot-hole and hung suspended before bursting forward again she felt for a second or so that her head was not part of her body. It seemed to float away, partially detached, on loose and distended wires. It became like the head of a broken doll, pitching forward and then lolling into place again.

But in fear she was determined also not to be ill. She sat with her hands clenched at her sides. She was free of her mother and now, at last, in spite of everything, she was going to India with Paterson. And nobody, if she could help it, was going to prevent that; least of all Miss Allison.

She had watched the gradual strengthening of the Eurasian girl with fear. She had thought of her first simply as one of those girls. There were millions of them. They did not matter. Then Miss Allison had put on her nurse's uniform, brought out the medical aid box. A strange change had come over her. It was exactly like the change of the anonymous, half-alive chrysalis into another creature. The white hospital cap she wore had given her a certain frigidity of stature and authority.

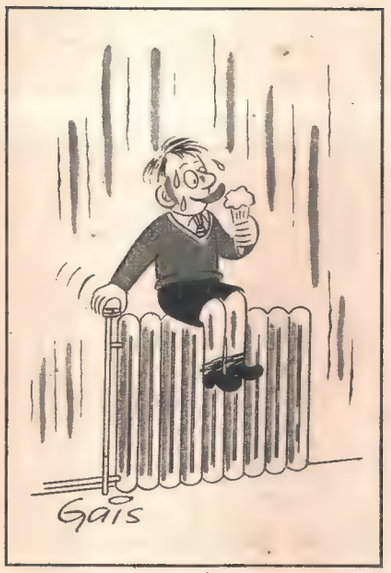
The thermometer had taken Connie unawares at first. Or rather Miss Allison had taken her unawares. "Just hold that in your mouth for a second." Of course, it was in there a minute before you knew. And then they never told you what it said. It was your temperature and they took the secret of it away.

Somehow it had to be beaten. If the Eurasian girl discovered a temperature of 103 or 104 Paterson would camp down.

India could not be far away. Connie thought of it always as being a little beyond the haze of hills, two or three hundred miles away.

Most of the time Miss Allison did not seem to be watching her. She had grown indifferently tired of the hysterical acts of the English girl.

Instead she began to be more and more troubled by what she saw on the road. Whenever she saw a break in the defile of walking people, men and women, Burmese and Hindu, Moslem and Madrassi, she leaned out of the car, facing the clotting yellow dust and the sudden ferocious vertical blow of sun, to see what had broken it. Sometimes a little camp had been made. A few people were sitting about, listlessly eating, staring at the car. They munched with faces of dusty rubber.



And then sometimes she saw that it was not a camp. The knotted faces were staring at the earth. Once she saw on the dust the purple-rose feet of an Indian sticking vertically up from a crowd of Burmese waist-cloths, and she knew that the Indian was dying and that the Burmese could not leave him until the breath had gone out of the body. All she could see as the car passed slowly forward were the pink undersides of the too flat feet that had something of the tenderness of the feet of a child.

All the time there was nothing she could do. The car, part of the stream of traffic, was like a link in a chain. Fixed there, it could not be taken out until the road widened or the forest cleared. She could do nothing but sit there watching the other chain of living and dead that ran brightly between herself and the trees, and at the same time count the dead. There were twenty-three of them before noon.

WHEN they camped that night the narrowness of the road gave them no choice of ground. The one tent was pitched by the forest fringe. Connie was to share it with Miss Allison.

When she discovered this she crawled inside and arranged the bed and lay down. Then she waited for Paterson or Miss Allison to come to her. Her head had begun to tighten up; the angles of the little tent seemed sharply narrowed, rigidly confining her. Outside, the hollow voices of bullocks bellowed among the trees and a few Indians were singing wretchedly, with maddening repeated quarter tones, not fifty yards away.

They won't neglect me, she thought. Someone will come. Her stomach turned over and over in weakening waves.

After a time she was aware of Tuesday standing at the opening of the tent.

"Supper, Miss. Patson says please come."

"I'm not hungry, thank you; I'm not coming."

"Tell Patson?"

"Yes. Tell Mr. Paterson I'm not coming."

As the boy went away she pulled the blanket over her shoulders. She had not undressed. But now she felt suddenly that her clothes had a terribly moist oppressiveness.

So she got up and took everything off and then once again lay down, pulling the blanket over her. Her nakedness seemed at once to give her a feeling of great lightness.

And then all of a sudden Paterson was in the tent, talking.

"Are you all right? Don't you want to eat?"

He stood crouched over the bed. She saw his face in the rosy reflection of the camp fire.

"I'm all right. I'm all right really."

"You ought to eat. You didn't eat at midday."

The feeling of the two of them so confined in the close space of the tent, in the filtered light of fires, she herself naked under the blanket and Paterson bending down, suddenly made her tremble. Under the pressure of it she found herself telling him a frantic lie.

"I'm all right really. I took my own temperature. It's just under a hundred. Not much."

"You ought to eat. That's the trouble. You get over-hungry."

THE sensation of nakedness, the private physical sensation, coupled itself suddenly with the sensation of telling the lie. She felt both of them excite her.

Then Paterson stooped down. She actually felt him touch the blanket.

"Miss Allison has sleeping tablets. If I send them over will you take a couple?"

"Yes."

Even as she said it she knew that that, too, was a deliberate lie. She would not take the tablets. She would put them under the bed roll and say she had taken them.

"You're sure you're all right?" he said.

"Yes. Just not hungry."

"No hot and cold fits?"

"No."

"No shivering?"

"No."

"Nothing you want?"

She saw him put his hands on his knees, preparing to straighten up, ready to go. She did not want him to go. The sensation of intimacy, heightened by nakedness, became suddenly so strong that she felt her arms begin to tremble still more violently under the blanket.

"Perhaps I'll have some tea."

"All right," he said. "There's no milk, though."

"I like it without."

She felt herself gripping the blanket with both hands. All she had to do was to turn and let the blanket slip away. She would turn and it would slip from her shoulders and Paterson would see all that lay beneath it. For a second she felt the sweat of exhaustion and excitement pour down her body, and then in a quiver of relaxation she drew the blanket not down but closer against her face.

Paterson stood as upright as he could in the tent, saying, "I'll send the tea," and even as he said it he looked embarrassed and she knew that it was all over. He turned almost immediately and, stooping, went out.

It was half past ten when Miss Allison came in.

The nurse came slowly into the tent, drying her hands on a towel. Her mouth was open as if she were about to say something but had forgotten what.

"I thought you might have come in to see how I was."

"Yes. I meant to."

"Well, anyway, Mr. Paterson came."

"Yes?"

"Yes. He took my temperature." Her resentment and impatience against the nurse suddenly took exactly the form her emotions had taken with Paterson. She lied again: "It's normal. It's ninety-eight."

"Yes?"

She wished suddenly that the nurse would not repeat that single questioning word in that infuriating way.

"It was nice to have some company. It did me good. I was here. In bed."

Miss Allison slowly dried her hands and stood for fully half a minute staring before her without a word.

"He stayed a long time," the girl said. "It was nice."

It occurred to her suddenly to tell Miss Allison, somehow, that Paterson was in love with her. The whole notion was abruptly checked by the sight of blood on Miss Allison's towel.

CONNIE sat suddenly upright. And as she did so the blanket fell away from her shoulders. Miss Allison blinked sharply as if briefly interested in the sight of the girl sitting there completely naked to the waist and then, slowly, with terrible tiredness, began to cry.

"Are you hurt?" the girl said. "What's that blood on your hands?"

"We delivered a baby. Two babies."

"We?"

"Mrs. Betteson."

Connie did not know what to say. Miss Allison walked about, still wiping the hands that were long since dry.

"A Madrassi girl and a Burmese." Miss Allison began to rub her face with the damp, blood-stained towel, in an effort to dry her tears. "Mrs. Betteson did the Burmese, and I did the Madrassi. The Madrassi girl died. Mine."

"I'm sorry." Connie felt weak again and sick.

"That makes twenty-four today."

"Twenty-four what?"

But Miss Allison never answered. She walked in a dream of exhaustion out of the tent and outside, in the light of the hurricane lamp, she cried quietly, on and on. Her voice, in its too high pitch, seemed to continue in a way that did not belong to either East or West.

In the tent Connie McNairn pulled the blanket over her head and pressed her face tightly on the pillow, so that she could not hear that wailing except as something heard through the cushion of a wall. After a time she fell into a half-doze and did not hear it again.

To be continued next week

THE HUMAN MACHINE • by ROFFE THOMPSON

ONE of the real dangers of today is our tendency to be guided by "potted thought."

More and more we think in catch-phrases without bothering to find out what these really mean. It is so easy, for instance, to label half the world "Democratic" and the other half "Red"—but could *you* define exactly what either word means?

No doubt it is convenient to say Dictatorship is wholly bad and Democracy wholly good—but is this simple explanation of the chaotic state of society the *whole* truth?

Thinking in slogans—"potted thought"—isn't thinking at all, for it doesn't rest on knowledge or a desire to see a situation in full perspective.

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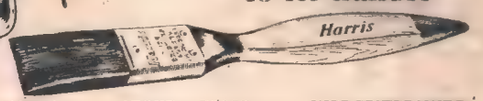

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MADE BY THE TONI DIVISION OF GILLETTE, ISLEWORTH, MIDDLESEX

Folding his arms, Joe watched as they began. "How did I get home after burying the body, then?" he asked

A lifetime's devotion

by WILL SCOTT

ILLUSTRATED BY NICKLESS

Joe's wife led him a dog's life. Always shouting—till that night when he was seen digging in the woods

JOE'S WIFE LED HIM a devil of a life. It was "Joe, do this" and "Joe, do that," from morning to night. And if Joe didn't do it on the dot the row broke out. Mostly he did it on the dot, but that didn't always stop the row breaking out.

Joe was like that, always willing to oblige. He was a littlish chap with a wide mouth and a habit of saying "Yes, yes" to calm his wife down when she was on top of her form. Or to try to. Nothing ever really calmed her down when she got going.

"If I had *her* round my collar I'd put her out," declared the landlord of the "Ploughshare."

But Joe actually made allowances for the woman. "The wife's very good with *pies*," he'd say.

It was a mystery to Mrs. Anshaw, who lived opposite, how women like Joe's wife invariably got a husband in a million. But Anshaw himself only grinned when he heard this and said something about still waters running deep.

"How do you mean?" asked Mrs. Anshaw.

"It wouldn't surprise me," said Anshaw, "if one of these days Joe did that old cat in."

Mrs. Anshaw thought he'd gone mad.

"An inoffensive little chap like Joe?" she said.

"That's the type," said Anshaw. "They take it till they can't take any more, then something bursts. A man can stand only so much. You mark my words, anyway. One of these days Joe will do his missus in."

And when things boiled up that time there was a smug look on Anshaw's face. An "I told you so" sort of look. The worm, he said, had turned at last. And there was great excitement when it got round that P.C. Biddle was *digging* up in Potiphar's Wood. The "Ploughshare" was empty in ten seconds.

It had all started like an ordinary row. That is, what passed with Joe and his wife for an ordinary row. Joe's rows with his wife were always one-sided affairs. He'd whistle bits of tunes and agree with her. But that didn't stop her going all out.

Sometimes she smashed plates and window panes. And she always told the world at the top of her voice what she thought of Joe. You could hear the din down at the "Ploughshare." But that was nothing out of the common. If it had been an ordinary set-to like that nobody would have thought any more about it.

But this time it was different.

Usually, after one of their rows, Joe would go down to the "Ploughshare" and have more than was good for him and tell everybody that his missus wasn't a bad sort, really; it was just that women were "different." There never was such a one for making allowances. Then he'd go back home, whistling, and you'd hear no more till the next time.

This time, though, it didn't work out like that.

Joe went down to the "Ploughshare" all right, and he had more than was good for him. But he never said a word, and he wasn't whistling. He just sat and stared at the fire, until the others began to wonder what was the matter with him.

Funnily enough, if Harry Abbot hadn't been talking about his old dog in the "Ploughshare" tap that night things might have turned out very differently.

Harry Abbot was up against it at the time. In fact, if it hadn't been for pals of his he wouldn't have been there getting his beer. He didn't know where to turn for his next shilling, and he'd just put his old dog to sleep because he couldn't afford the licence.

"There's plenty would have taken her off my hands," he said, "but I wasn't having that. I've had her all her life and she wouldn't have been happy with other people. And I wouldn't have been happy seeing her with other people. It's like what the old song says about a lifetime's devotion."

Harry was quiet a bit, thinking, then he went on.

"It's better as it is. I've buried her where nobody knows, so it's just between the two of us. I can go along now and again, and look at where she is."

Joe hadn't said a word the whole time. He hadn't even said "Pint" when he came in, because the landlord knew what he wanted, and he knew when he wanted another. Of course, they all knew there'd been a row on, but a row with his missus had never taken Joe this way before. Nobody could make head or tail of it.

And they couldn't guess that what Harry Abbot said would put ideas in Joe's head. He pretty nearly cracked that tankard, slamming it down. He was up out of his corner as if he'd been kicked out of it. He didn't say good night. He hurried out and got on his old bike and rattled away as hard as he could go.

THAT old bike of Joe's had been built in the year dot by the look of it, and Joe on it made a real sketch. Any other night they'd have called "old iron!" after him, but this time, somehow, they thought they'd better not.

"Something wrong with old Joe tonight," said somebody.

"I wish," said the landlord to Harry Abbot, "you hadn't said that about burying your old dog."

"How d'you mean?" said Harry.

"I was watching him," said the landlord. "He was listening pretty hard, and there was a funny look in his eye."

It sounded nasty, the way he said it. He left it at that, but it couldn't have been plainer if he'd actually said: "If ever I saw murder in a man's eye. . . ." It certainly got everybody thinking that way. Only what made it silly was that Joe was one of the nicest and mildest little chaps you could meet in a month of Sundays.

All the same, there were one or two sly looks at his little cottage on the way home that night. It was a relief when the row was heard to have broken out again. It showed she was still *alive*.

Next morning, though, the talk went on where it had left off the night before. For the cottage was silent. And Mrs. Joe didn't seem to be about. She was usually pottering in and out all the time.

And then a bit later on one of Mrs. Anshaw's boys saw Jim on his old bike—when he ought to have been at work—going up to Potiphar's Wood. And there was a spade tied across his handlebars.

Of course, there was nothing you could put your finger on, and things didn't get really started until P.C. Biddle had had a little talk with the landlord down at the "Ploughshare." Ten minutes later somebody heard him having a little talk with Joe, over the garden gate.

"Your missus gone away for a bit of a holiday?" he asked in a casual sort of way.

"Couldn't tell you," said Joe.

"I haven't seen her around today," said P.C. Biddle.

"Well, I don't know where she's got to," said Joe, "and what's more, I don't give a damn."

"That's not a nice way to talk," said P.C. Biddle.

"Pity," said Joe, getting on with whatever he was doing.

Which wasn't a bit like Joe in the ordinary way.

Later on that day P.C. Biddle went up and had a look round in Potiphar's Wood. And most of the males in the place over the age of ten went up and had a look round, too. Not with P.C. Biddle. About ten yards behind him.

P.C. Biddle wasn't pleased about this

at first. But afterwards, when he found where there had been digging, he was glad he had somebody to help.

It was under a beech tree, right in the middle of Potiphar's Wood where nobody ever went as a regular thing, and it was just about the size and just about the shape of a grave.

"Ah!" said P.C. Biddle.

He called for a volunteer or two.

"I'll have to stay on the spot," he said, "but I shall want a couple of spades. Oh—and a lantern. It'll be getting dark before long and I may be here some time."

That was enough. Off went the volunteers, feeling very important. By this time all kinds of rumours were getting about. Everybody was talking, and somehow or other some of the talk got to Joe. But he didn't bolt—which was what more than one had been waiting for. The spades and lantern were up in Potiphar's Wood inside a quarter of an hour, and so was Joe, tailed on behind the volunteers. He kept out of sight at first.

"Somebody'll have to take the other spade," said P.C. Biddle.

Harry Abbot offered and they got down to it. When the diggers were a foot down they heard a laugh. That's when they first saw Joe in the shadows.

"Oh, it's you," said P.C. Biddle, easing up from the digging.

"You've got a warm job on there," said Joe, as if he was trying to make polite conversation.

"You'd better stay around," said P.C. Biddle, putting a lot of meaning into the words.

"You bet!" said Joe. "I wouldn't miss this for a week's money."

And he folded his arms and fixed his back against a tree.

When the hole was about two feet down he said, all at once: "You know, Biddle, my lad, you're going to make a ruddy fool of yourself."

P.C. Biddle looked up and frowned, but he didn't say anything.

"You'd have saved a good bit of trouble," said Joe, "if you'd asked somebody how I got back home after I'd buried the body."

"The body? Ah!" said P.C. Biddle.

"In a manner of speaking," said Joe. He laughed. "I walked, you see. If that means anything to you. It ought, you know."

Even then P.C. Biddle couldn't be sure Joe wasn't putting up a bluff, so he kept on digging. After a bit he threw aside his spade and Harry Abbot threw aside his. They both bent over the grave and the rest of them drew in to stare. And out of that hole under the beech tree in Potiphar's Wood they pulled—what do you think?

Joe's old bike!

Some of them laughed. Some of them looked puzzled. P.C. Biddle wasn't far off being the first man who had ever lost his temper with Joe.

"You'll have to explain all this," he said.

"*I'll* have to?" said Joe. "You wait till you start to make out your report!"

"Well, what's it all *about*?" snapped P.C. Biddle.

Joe turned to Harry Abbot in that mild way of his.

"Remember what you said about your dog, Harry? Well, this old bike of mine has been as much to me as ever your dog was to you."

And he got hold of the rusty old wreck and began to stroke the handlebars. Somebody said afterwards it was like a mother and a child.

Then Joe went on as nobody had ever heard him go on before. He got things off his chest about that old bike. It had been a joke in the village for years, and you'd never have guessed that Joe could feel that way about it. The old bike, he told them, was nigh on thirty years old. He remembered when he bought it, where he bought it and how much he paid for it. It had taken him to work and back over all those years. It had taken him to London and back several times. Once, when he was younger, it had even taken him to Devon.

It was uncanny, Harry Abbot said, listening to old Joe going on about his old bike up there in Potiphar's Wood by lantern light.

"And now it's done for," Joe sighed, looking down at it. "It's been done for for a year or more, but I didn't like to let it go. All the same, it's still mine, you know, and what I do with it now it's had its day, is nobody's business."

He gave P.C. Biddle a stern look.

"Do you know what?" he said. "My missus was after selling it for junk. *Junk!* My old bike. . . . She'd have done it, too, if she could have put her hands on it. We'd a proper up-and-downer about it last night and I said some things to her I've never said before. She was sort of *jealous*, if you know what I mean. She's been a good wife to me, but she never did like me liking that bike like I have. Women are funny things."

He shook his head and thought a bit, then he turned to Harry Abbot again.

"When you said you'd buried your old dog where nobody knows, so it's just between the two of you, I knew what to do. When I've finished with my old bike *everybody's* finished with it. Sell it for junk? Not while I've got my hands on it!"

"Look here," said P.C. Biddle, all at once. "Where *is* your missus?"

"I've told you once, I don't know," said Joe. "I expect she's gone to her sister's up in London. I don't know anywhere else she could go. But she didn't say. She just went."

"Why?" asked Biddle.

Joe looked a bit sheepish.

"She reckoned it would do me good to be left on my own for a bit. It was because I sauced her back, about my bike. She'll turn up again before long, you'll see."

He turned his old bike round.

"Oh well," he said, "I shall have to find another place. I wish you chaps could have minded your own business."

And down through the wood went Joe, pushing his collection of old iron in front of him. The others followed, P.C. Biddle last of all, trying to look dignified and not having much luck. When Joe got home he locked the old bike up safely in a shed at the back. Then he went in and shut the door.

"It beats the band," said P.C. Biddle. "Fancy a chap getting that way about a rusty old boneshaker."

And there was more than one good laugh, as well as a lot of talk, not only then, outside Joe's cottage, but later on down at the "Ploughshare."

"Wonder if she'll ever come back?" said Harry Abbot.

"Best thing for Joe if she didn't," said the landlord.

But she did. The very next day she turned up in the middle of the afternoon and let herself into the cottage. She seemed to be in a worse temper than usual, and none of the neighbours risked speaking to her. There was a lot of door-slamming to be heard.

Then Mrs. Anshaw, looking out of her window, saw her come out with a hammer in her hand and go round to the shed at the back and start to knock the padlock off.

"She's after Joe's bike!" Mrs. Anshaw thought.

She was, too. She pulled it out of the shed, got it into the lane and pushed it away to the town. When she came back it wasn't long before all the neighbours had the full story.

She'd got two shillings for Joe's old bike at a junk yard.

What Mrs. Joe was thinking showed on her face. That was the end of *that*.

Only, it wasn't the end at all, as she very soon found out.

Joe came home at teatime, and when he heard what had happened to his bike a queer sort of change came over him. His missus set her jaw and waited for him to start. But he didn't start. Joe never said a word.

He didn't even have his tea. He sat and stared at nothing for a bit, then he pushed the tea things away and went down the garden. Mrs. Joe could see him through the window, choosing a long piece of thick rope out of the shed.

For the first time in her life Mrs. Joe was scared. That long piece of thick rope made her think. If only he'd shouted at her, or thrown the teapot at her, and got it out of his system. But there wasn't even a grumble. The awful quiet made her feel goosey.

When dusk began to fall she was knocking at Mrs. Anshaw's door.

"Can I come in?" she said. "I don't want to trouble you, Mrs. Anshaw, but I wonder if you'd let me stay here for the night. Till Joe's got over it. He means some evil, I'm sure he does."

Well, Mrs. Anshaw didn't want her there for the night, naturally. But what could she do?

"He's up to something," said Mrs. Joe, settling herself by Mrs. Anshaw's fireside. "I've never known him this way before. He isn't one for sulking, Joe isn't, I will say that for him. But now I can't get a word out of him. And there's such a funny look in his eyes."

"You never ought to have sold his old bike for scrap," said Mrs. Anshaw. "That bike was an old pal to Joe."

"I wish I hadn't now," said Mrs.

THIS WEEK'S COVER

WHENEVER Douglas L. Mays's cover kids have appeared, lots of readers have written in to say: "How delightful—just the pranks our own get up to!" In this case, let's hope *not*, because the kids should have been warned never, never to wait up for Santa. Off to bed they must go. Then maybe Santa will use that clear runway they've so carefully contrived by shifting the electric heater away from the chimney place.

Uncle Andy throws a Christmas Party

THIS GALLEON WILL MAKE A FINE TABLE CENTRE FOR OUR PARTY
MAST IS KNITTING NEEDLE
COTTON REELS FOR LANTERNS
CARDBOARD CUT-OUTS
SIDES
DECK
CROSSPIECES
SLOT CROSS-PIECES INTO SIDES. FASTEN DECK ON TOP OF CROSSPIECES. FIX MAST INTO DECK AND ADD THREAD FOR RIGGING. FINISH OFF WITH PAINT
WE'LL USE THESE METAL MILK CAPS TO MAKE DECORATIONS
THE SILVER WILL MAKE A LOVELY SHINE, UNCLE
BEND CAPS TO BELL SHAPE AND STRING TOGETHER ON KNOTTED THREAD
HERE'S A CLOSE-UP
HOW PRETTY THEY LOOK!
TWO PARTY GAMES YOU CAN PLAY
THIS ONE IS CALLED DETECTIVES. ONE PLAYER IS CHOSEN AS DETECTIVE AND IS SENT OUT OF THE ROOM. THE OTHERS TURN OUT THEIR POCKETS AND PLACE THE CONTENTS IN SEPARATE PILES ON A TABLE. DETECTIVE THEN COMES IN AND HAS TO TELL WHO OWNS WHICH PILE
THIS GAME IS CALLED CROSSING THE LINE. TAPES MARK THE "PITCH." A REFEREE WITH A WHISTLE IS CHOSEN AND THE PLAYERS LINE UP ON THE TOP LINE. WHEN THE WHISTLE BLOWS THE PLAYERS HAVE TO RACE OR HOP TO BOTTOM LINE. BEFORE THEY REACH IT THE REFEREE BLOWS THE WHISTLE AGAIN. PLAYERS MUST THEN TURN AND RACE BACK THE OTHER WAY. THIS HAPPENS EVERY TIME THE WHISTLE IS BLOWN. THE GAME ENDS WHEN ONE PLAYER MANAGES TO CROSS THE BOTTOM LINE

Joe. "You ought to see his *eyes*. There's something on. I'd be afraid to be alone in the house with him tonight."

"Can't you get his bike back?" said Mrs. Anshaw.

"They were breaking it up before I left," said Mrs. Joe. "And laughing at it. I told him. I'm sorry, now, I did."

"It's a case," said Mrs. Anshaw.

Not much more of Joe was seen that evening. Once he came to the gate to start an argument with P.C. Biddle, who was going by.

"You know what *you've* done, don't you?" said Joe.

"How?" said P.C. Biddle.

"If you'd kept out of what didn't concern you," said Joe, "my old bike would now be safe up in Potiphar's Wood and nobody knowing, instead of pulled to bits in a junk yard. It's a great pity people have to interfere."

Lights kept popping in and out, upstairs and down, until a late hour, over at Joe's cottage. Mrs. Joe was watching from Mrs. Anshaw's window and wondering what it meant.

"I hope it isn't his *brain*," she said. "I've never known a man change so. All over an old bike!"

Next morning, to Mrs. Anshaw's surprise, Joe's wife got herself dressed to go out.

"I know what I'm going to do," she said. "I know what'll sweeten him up. I've got a bit of money put by that Joe doesn't know about, and I know what I'm going to do with it."

She didn't say what it was, but after Joe had gone to work she went across to the cottage, no doubt to get the bit of money that he didn't know about, then she came out and set off to walk down into the town.

IN the middle of the morning a van pulled up outside Joe's cottage. A man got down and went round to the back and came out with two boxes tied up with thick rope.

"So *that's* what Joe wanted the rope for," everybody said. And up went their eyebrows. "Is he *clearing out*? Is he *leaving her* after all this time?"

Joe himself turned up before long. There seemed to be one or two things he wanted to do in the house. But at last he was out at the gate, lighting his pipe. And then Mrs. Anshaw and one or two others, looking through their windows, saw a most surprised expression come over his face. They turned round and looked the way he was looking, and there coming up the lane was Mrs. Joe.

She was pushing a brand-new bike! A green Sphynx. Twelve pounds, fifteen. It looked absolutely dazzling in the sunshine.

Joe took his pipe out of his mouth and stood there gaping. Mrs. Joe stopped at the gate. And quite a lot of people found they had business outside Joe's cottage.

"I've bought you a new bike, Joe," said Mrs. Joe, very nervously.

Joe pushed his pipe away in his pocket and looked as if he couldn't believe his eyes. He took hold of the handlebars and shook his head.

"Well! Well!! Well!!!" he said, to nobody at all.

"You've been wanting one for years," said Mrs. Joe.

Suddenly Joe began to laugh.

It was one of Joe's good old laughs, but, somehow, nobody felt like asking him what it was about this time. He stood there holding the shining new bike, looking up at the sky and laughing.

Then he threw one leg across the saddle, fumbled about for the pedal and went cycling away down the lane, still laughing. He was still laughing when he turned the corner.

And, believe it or not, from that minute to this Mrs. Joe has never set eyes on him. No more has anybody else in these parts.

Why only once a year?

by HERBERT HODGE

From a few coppers, mother and son conjured up the spirit of Christmas

THE NICEST REMARK I've come across about Christmas this year was made by Thomas Burke, in his life-story, *Son of London*. Writing of the first Christmas he remembers, when he was five years old, living with his mother in a small back room in a London suburb, and absorbing the sights and the sounds of the Christmas streets, he says:

"For the first time in my short memory, life had come alive; everybody had woken up; and in that exaltation they all . . . became dear to me, and all things became charged with goodness. That, I felt, was Real Life. All I had known before in my five years . . . had been a grey sham."

A handful of hoarded coppers was all mother and son had to spend. But, in those days, it was enough. "A few penny toys, a few halfpenny Christmas cards, a ha'porth of holly, a fourpenny box of crackers, a sixpenny box of crystallized fruits, a present of mince pies, a more generous fire than usual, and two candles instead of one"—and up came the spirit of Christmas in all its glory.

Easy When You're Young

The miracle is easy when one is five. It seems to grow difficult only as one grows older. What puzzled five-year-old Thomas Burke was why Christmas came only once a year. Why wasn't it Christmas all the time?

I've often wondered why, myself. The real joy of Christmas, it seems to me, is in the way we feel about it—full of generosity and loving-kindness and the desire to give happiness to everyone. And since we all seem to like feeling Christmasy, why do so many of us ration ourselves to only one day of it a year?

The feeling doesn't cost anything. There's no question of dollars or sterling. It's absolutely free. Yet so many of us go on carefully hoarding up our generous impulses until the calendar says December 25. Then we joyfully let go, and discover afresh each year what a lot of good it does us. It seems ridiculous that we don't do it more often.

I can't claim to be any better than most people in this respect. I'm probably worse than average—especially in thinking twice before giving way to a generous impulse. That's why I know so much about it. But even I like feeling Christmasy; and wish that we could live in the spirit of Christmas all the year round.

Too Much of a Good Thing

Human nature, we're told, is against it. If we suddenly altered the calendar and made every day a Christmas Day, the strain of being kind and generous would be too much for nearly everybody; even some of the nicest people we know.

For my part, I lead a toffee-apple sort of life; mingling the sweet and the sour, and enjoying the taste of both. It's glorious to be good on one day; but it's quite pleasant to be diabolical the next. Of course, I'm usually sorry for it afterwards, but that doesn't prevent me from enjoying it at the time.

The best way to help a person like me, I think, would be to alter the calendar so as to give our days a better balance. At present, we've got one Christmas Day in the year (on which we are expected to be generous and kind) and 364 other days (on which we can be kind or unkind according to the whim of the moment).

The result is that whenever I feel like doing anybody a kindness, especially when it means giving away something I might possibly need myself, I'm apt to say: "I'll wait till Christmas." And maybe, by the time Christmas comes round, I've forgotten all about it. So the good deed doesn't get done.

But if I feel like choking anybody off, or wiping anybody up, I never feel the urge to wait till Christmas—or any future day. There's nothing to prevent me from doing it at once. There are no special days in the year set apart for that sort of thing. I think there should be.

If I were rearranging the calendar, I wouldn't make any more Christmases in the year. Instead, I'd make a new kind of day, and call it Diabolical Day—the day designed especially for dirty deeds.

Such a day could be the salvation of people like me. Whenever I felt like being angry with someone, I could say: "I'll do it on Diabolical Day."

When Diabolical Day came round, I might have forgotten my intention or I might not. But, in any case, I should have been encouraged to save up my diabolical desires for the one special day when I could let them all rip.

Step in the Right Direction

With this glorious prospect always in mind I think I should find it easier on all the other days of the year to behave like a little gentleman. It could thus set my feet firmly on the path toward making nearly every day a Christmas Day, and celebrating what is now my Ordinary Day only once in a twelvemonth.

But that, perhaps, is looking a bit too far into the future. At first, some of us might need more than one Diabolical Day a year. The safest plan for me, I think, would be to start with one a week. Saturday, I think, would suit me best. Then I could be sweet and clean for Sunday.

Gradually, I might be able to save up my diabolical desires for a whole fortnight. (What a Saturday that would be!) Anyway, "Save it till Saturday" would be my motto. And everybody in my neighbourhood could take warning.

Come to think of it, there's no need for me to wait for any official reform of the calendar. I can mark up my own Diabolical Days on my own calendar right now. But I shall have to hold off this Saturday, since it's Christmas. I'll have to make a resolution about it for the New Year.

WITH MY FEET UP • by IAN FOX

PUBLISHERS MOAN that there is a slump in the sale of books. The reason is obvious. People have read them all.

This opinion of mine was backed up by a woman novelist who makes quite a living by turning out two or three new novels a month.

"Readers are becoming more perspicacious, if that's the right word," she said. "I mean they're more fly than they were. We writers can still use the same old plot, but nowadays we not only have to change the names of the characters, but the places, too."

* * *

A JUDGE has said receipted hotel bills produced in divorce cases should bear a twopenny stamp if over £2. A seaside hotel manager comments: "Of course, we always keep a supply of twopenny stamps because no one could stay here for more than ten minutes without it costing more than £2. In fact, we add a fifty per cent lickage charge to the cost of the stamp."

HE TOOK THE £250 CAKE

"FOR three months," this railway clerk told JOHN BULL, "I'd not entered a single *Bullet*. Then my wife noticed cakes being offered for Christmas and suggested we could do with one. I had a go—and won the £250 first prize instead!"

So this will be an extra happy Christmas for reader G. W. Stewart, 96 Glenhead Street, Possilpark, Glasgow. Now, with that coupon below, you can win £250 and a radiogram to make it a prosperous New Year.

After Christmas, be early at the newsagent's for your next JOHN BULL, out on Thursday, December 30. On the competition page you'll find the biggest news for "Bulleteers" since prewar days. Remember—it's the Thursday after Christmas for that first peep in your New Year stocking!

FINAL RADIOGRAM OFFER THIS WEEK!

"Bullets" Prizes value over **£500**

£250 1st Prize plus

£55 RADIOGRAM

£25 2nd Prize—£10 3rd Prize

£9, £8, £7, £6, 5 of £5

50 MYSTERY PRIZES each value 30s.

1,000 "Good Shots," with £10 Opportunity

THE PRIZE RADIOGRAM, a Portogram product in figured walnut, combines a superb 5-valve 3-wave Radio and a Gramophone of glorious tone. Truly a millionaire's instrument—a thing of beauty and a joy to listen to!

NEW YEAR SURPRISES

Sweeping developments are coming in *Bullets* next week. Look out for full details of the bold 1949 plan to provide more and bigger prizes for "Bulleteers"!

ADD 2, 3 or 4 WORDS to any of these "EXAMPLES"

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* on right. To use an incomplete *Example*, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make *Bullet* as usual.

The 1949 Picture	Doesn't Fit
Tyrant Winter	Bacon And Eggs
Lesson Of The Past	Feeble
Plumber Cripps	Big Bad Wolf
To Get Things Ship-shape	A New Toy
Mountain Of Arma-ments	Heard For Miles
We Wish	Now Dad's A Terrier
Words, Words, Words	**Incomplete "Examples" —see instructions**
In His Dreams	No More.....
Primitive Man	Easy On The.....
Whistling	I'm Not....., But
A Handful	.....Itself
Becoming A Necessity	Properly.....
	If It Weren't For.....

GET YOUR GUIDE

To secure the *Bullets* and Crosswords help in *Bulletin* and *Gazette* dated Jan. 15, enclose label below with your *Bullets* or Crossword entry this week.

POST ENTRY

"Bullets" 1,661 (or Xword 613) "John Bull," "LongAcre, London, W.C.2 (Comp.)

NOTE.—You may enclose *Bullets* and Xword entries in same envelope, covered by single P.O. for combined entry-fee. Mark envelope "COMBINED," top left-hand corner.

STICK 2½d. STAMP here to get help of *Bulletin* and *Gazette* dated Jan. 15 containing THRILLING NEW "BULLETS" OFFER

If this is your first specimen copy please mark × here

474

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B. .....

EX. .....

B. .....

EX. .....

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Fee: 1s. for 4 or 6d. for 2 *Bullets*—plain paper efforts same rate.

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"Bullets" Winners No. 1,658

FIRST PRIZE, £750 and Celebration Weekend: E. Brighton, 29 Victoria Terrace, Leeds, 3:

BETTER MAN FREE, THAN SUPERMAN FETTERED

SECOND PRIZE, £50: Mrs. A. E. Wynne, 24 Lockett Road, Widnes, Lancs: EMPTY STOCKING—SEVERAL BULGING PILLOW-SLIPS—HAPPINESS!

THIRD PRIZE, £25: R. P. CARTER, 29B West End, Witney, Oxon: BETTER MAN—DID GUNPOWDER? WILL URANIUM?

OTHER AWARDS. £20: A. Dowling, 36 Aubrey Road, Bristol, 3: SOMETHING FOR YOUTH'S—EDUCATION, THIS *Shattered* "GLOBE." £15: Nurse I. Lessons, 28 Spa Grove, Lupset, Wakefield: SHOPKEEPER BRITANNIA—"SMART BOYS" *Aren't* HELPING. £10: E. P. Taunton, 12 St. Ann's Road, Great Malvern, Worcs.: SOMETHING FOR A—MERLIN, BERLIN.

FOUR of £5: R. E. Brown, 42 Wilbury Road, Hove, 3, Sussex: SOMETHING FOR CHRISTMAS — COCKEREL GAVE DAD FIRST! Mrs. R. Kellett, 12 Leighton Street, Moston, Manchester, 10: WHAT'S WRONG WITH UNDEVELOPED—TERRITORY, UNDER YOUR HAT? W. Mannall, 4 Manton Farm Cotts., Worksop, Notts: THE THIRD TIME—WELL NIGH WELLSIAN NIGHTMARE. W. A. C. WEIGHTMAN, 20 Ashley Road, Worksop, Notts: PLAGUE OF SONNY'S—LIFE, GRANDPA'S JET QUESTIONS!

Ten Prizes of £2, 30 of £1 10s., 50 of £1 and 2,000 "Good Shots" have also been posted.

RULES

1. First Prize to best *Bullet* received, others in order of merit—the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.
2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.
3. As entry-fee, enclose P.O. or stamps value 1s. for four *Bullets*, or value 6d. to cover two *Bullets*. Plain paper entries are allowed. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.
4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that results of this week's Contests in JOHN BULL dated January 22, also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding.

£100 WON OUTRIGHT —XWORD 610

WINNING WORDS. ACROSS: 1, Words. 4, Lamb. 6, Sower. 9, Net. 12, Bread. 13, Tone. 14, Plum. DOWN: 1 Walks. 2, Fowl. 3, Port. 5, Mute. 7, Tar. 8, Coble. 10, Post. 11, Fall.

£100 OUTRIGHT WINNER: Sgt. N. Wallace, c/o 12 Southdene, Gaddesden Row, Hemel Hempstead.

£50 Xmas Cash for Runners-up shared between 24 entrants.

MORE HOUSEHOLD PRIZES for XWORDS

Awards value up to

£100 1st Prize and Awards £250

value £25 amongst Runners-up. ★ Grand prize with each Award value £1 and over—a 100-piece Breakfast, Dinner and Tea Service!

THIS WAY TO WIN

USEFUL cheques have been won by 25 readers in the last 10 Crossword contests; work out now that puzzle below and you may win not only a cheque but one of the 100-piece Services such as have been received by 29 competitors.

First complete Square in INK, giving your Answers to Clues on right. Then, if you wish to enter one extra Answer to any *one*, *two* or *three* Clues, give each such word in full in "Extra Answer" Form below Crossword Square.

Across Clues **XWORD 613**

1. A lie is probably not very difficult to
4. Wooden one may be all right for certain jobs
6. You should make sure you've the money before you do this
9. Villager is naturally a bit wary of
11. Pupils may see things more clearly with the aid of
13. Now and again it's hard work to secure wicket in this
14. Certain bankers like these to be heavy

Down Clues

1. Heavy ones are inclined to be clumsy
2. This sort of fun is expected by kiddies during Christmas holidays
3. Dad doesn't like them to be treated roughly
5. When a man does this, a little of his pride goes
7. Doing this for a long time is apt to spoil greens
8. Boats need them
10. People staying at hotels aren't usually interested in
12. Was vital factor at Dunkirk

WIN A CHEQUE AND 100-in-1 PRIZE!

1 B	O		2 S	T	E	R			3			
O	N				A	M		M	O			
		4	O	5 L	T		6	A	Y			
7 T	B		W	O		8		I	S			
S	O	N				9 R		M				
			A	E	R	O			10			
11	L	A	S	S		W	12 T		A			
	I	N	K		U	S	I	N	G			
I	N	N		M	S				E			
613	13 G	A		E		14		E	T	S		

In adjudication, all Extra Answers will be read in combination with each other and with all Answers in your Square. Thus your completed Square with one extra Answer to *one* Clue will represent *two* full Squares (Entry-fee 6d.). Square with one extra Answer to *two* Clues will represent *four* full Squares (Entry-fee 1s.), and Square with one extra Answer to *three* Clues will represent *eight* full Squares (Entry-fee 2s.). Use ink, not pencil.

Single Square with 6d. P.O. or stamps covers dispatch to you of *Crossword Gazette* dated January 15.

Winner—sender of most meritorious set of Answers received—decided by Adjudication Committee on basis of aptness and accuracy. Ties divide. Entrants limited to one prize per Contest and to entry requiring not more than 4s. entry-fee. Signature below is agreement to Rules.

CLUE	EXTRA ANSWER	Total Fee
No.		6d.
No.		1s.
No.		2s.

(Total fee shown includes entry on Square)

613 Closing Postmark MON., JAN. 3

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Write to John Bull About It

Answers of general interest are published each week. Send queries (except medical) to JOHN BULL *Free Advice Service, 186 High Holborn, London, W.C.1, enclosing stamp for reply.*

Quiet Wedding

F. H. (Liverpool): A "quiet" marriage is certainly attainable in a Register Office, where there are few formalities. Marriage before a Registrar is just as legal and binding as that performed in church or chapel. If you have the necessary residential qualification—fifteen days—you call upon the Registrar for the district and complete a form known as "the Notice," giving such particulars as names, ages and places of residence, and signing a declaration that there is no legal impediment to the marriage. The date and time of marriage is a matter for arrangement with the Registrar when the notice has been completed. You must arrange for the presence of at least two witnesses. If you are under twenty-one you must produce the written consent of your parents.

Wants to be a Sailor

E. W. (Wrexham): A boy can ensure that his national service is done with the Royal Navy by joining the R.N.V.R. The minimum age of entry into that service is now seventeen.

Children Who Swear

W. P. H. (Devonport): It is not pleasant to hear children swearing, but this is not surprising if the father uses bad language in the home. Children pick up new words quickly and like to use them on what they feel to be appropriate occasions. A father's good example in this matter is all-important. Punishment alone will not remove objectionable words from a child's mind; in fact it may stamp them more firmly in his memory.

Wife's Income Tax

B. L. (Hull): A married woman can now earn up to £138 for the year ending April 5 without becoming liable to pay income tax herself and without affecting her husband's income tax liability in any way. If her earnings exceed that sum she is liable to pay tax on the same scale as a single person, but again her husband's tax liability is not affected.

Who Pays?

R. H. (Mansfield): If a dentist taking part in the National Health Service scheme considers that gas is necessary for treatment, no charge should be made. If, however, gas is administered merely at a patient's request, the dentist is entitled to make a charge.

Post Office Savings

S. W. (Walsall): Post Office Savings Bank interest has to be returned for income tax assessment whether it has been withdrawn from the account or not. This is so even if the book has not been sent in to be "made up."

John Bull's Free Insurance Gift

Benefits and conditions of the JOHN BULL 1949 Free Family Insurance were given in full in last week's issue. Registered readers automatically qualify for full benefits of the 1949 scheme, which supersedes all previous schemes, without the necessity of re-registration.

If a change of address or newsagent has taken place full details must be sent to JOHN BULL'S Insurance Department, 128 Long Acre, London, W.C.2.

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Like Molly? ALWAYS FIT, EXCEPT WHEN SHE PLAYS ON TOP OF A MEAL

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Honeydew Brown 3/5½ · Shag 3/6 · Cut Plug 3/6½

EMPIRE BLENDS

[PD 96C]

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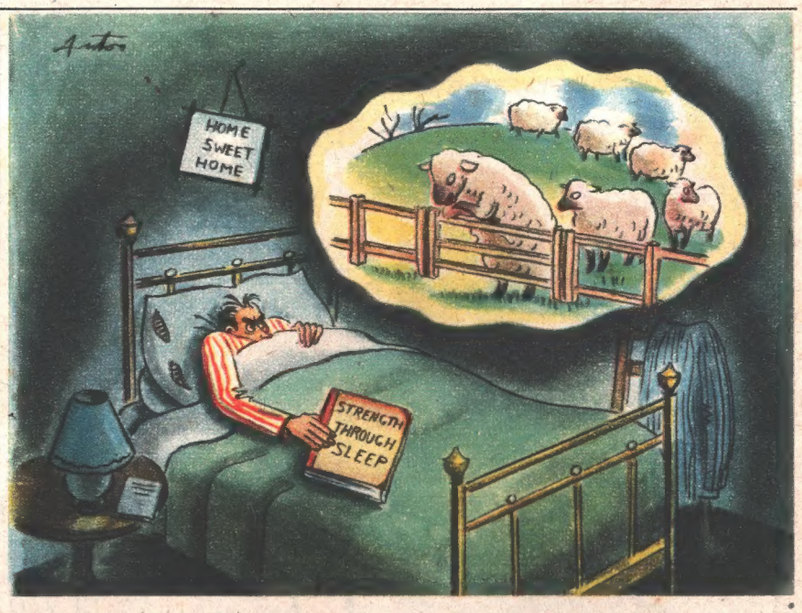
where the best *foods* go!

ENGLISH CANNED FRUITS - VEGETABLES - SOUPS



"Sorry, we're for export only"

Is *SLEEP* an invisible export?

MORE and more production! cry the Government. More and more exports! *Work, work, work!*

We all know they're right, and we're doing our best. But more work depends on more energy. . . . Where are we to get it from?

If everyone in the factories, or down the mines, or on the farms, if every housewife battling with rations and queues—yes, if all of us could get more energy, things would be a lot easier!

Food and Sleep

Our energy is controlled by food and sleep. Food is rationed, sleep isn't. If we slept more, could we get more energy for the production drive? Is sleep what they call an invisible export?

It's all a question of the *kind* of sleep. Curiously enough, length of sleep isn't so important as depth.

You prove this yourself every time you wake tired in the morning after quite a long night's sleep.

"Work hard, dear, and perhaps Uncle Sam will send us some nice dollars"

How to get Energy

Only deep sleep has the power to put back into your body and brain the energy and vitality you use up during the day.

If you want more energy, deep sleep will give it you. One of the best ways to ensure deep sleep is to drink a cup of Horlicks at bedtime. Horlicks soothes and relaxes, helps the weary body to renew its store of energy.

Drink Horlicks at night, and you'll wake up in the morning feeling more than a match for the production drive—*and* the fish queues!

For nine long years, the housewife has borne the brunt of austerity. It is she who fills the dinner plates and washes them up, stands in the queues, scrubs the floors, and mends the socks. No wonder she sometimes feels near breaking point!

What women need now more than ever in their lives is something to soothe and heal and refresh their tired bodies and nerves.

Nature has only one prescription for this. It is her most precious gift—sound, *deep* sleep.

DEEP SLEEP . . . Do's and Don'ts

DON'T try and sleep rolled up into a ball. Babies do, but each year sees a gradual straightening out until by the age of 10 no trace of the infantile trait should be left

DO stiffen the entire body while lying in bed, then relax completely. Start with the top of the head and work down, relaxing each part as you go—forehead, eyes, nose, cheeks, mouth, and so on

DON'T get overtired. Over-fatigue often prevents sleep. We sleep not so much because we are tired as in order to avoid becoming so

DO drink Horlicks before going to bed. Horlicks is more than a soothing drink—it is an assurance of the deep sleep you need for energy next day

HORLICKS